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CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH THEOLOGY

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE ABBÉ BAUTAIN

THEISM AND THE MODERN MOOD

A PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THEOLOGY

THEISM AND THE SCIENTIFIC SPIRIT

REALISTIC THEOLOGY

CONTEMPORARY
ENGLISH
THEOLOGY

An American Interpretation

WALTER MARSHALL HORTON
OBERLIN COLLEGE



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CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH THEOLOGY

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FIRST EDITION

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PREFACE

THIS book has two main purposes: to promote a better understanding of English theology among my compatriots; and to cast light upon the present crisis of liberal theology in America by describing the similar crisis through which liberal theology in England has recently passed.

I must confess to having shared, for some years, the rather impatient attitude toward English thought which so easily arises from a first impression of its somewhat ponderous style. After a period of graduate study on the Continent, where I was delighted by the clarity of the French mind and awed by the profundity of the German mind, I found myself inclined to yawn and sigh when I opened an English book. Perhaps I was unwilling to grant my English cousins the right to be "foreign," which I so readily granted to the French and the Germans; perhaps I was unwilling, when confronted with a book written in my native tongue, to make that same effort to penetrate beyond words to thoughts which I so gladly made when obliged to translate French or German words into intelligible notions. Be that as it may, for years I nursed a private prejudice against English theology. I said secretly to myself that theology, as served up by the English, was as heavy and unpalatable as the standard English luncheon of mutton, cabbage, and unbuttered potatoes; and the effort to digest it was an unnecessary strain upon one's system.

I still find English theology hard reading, but now

I am convinced that the effort is well spent. For reasons indicated in the Introduction, I believe that German theology—which dominates Protestant thought in Continental Europe—has ceased to have power to guide American theology, save as it indicates dangers we have to escape and problems we have to solve. In religious as in political thought, English moderation, with all of its “muddling,” is a better guide today than German extremism; and we need to apply our wits to the extracting of its wisdom, however hard the process of extraction may prove to be. I cannot presume to have distilled its essence in this small book, nor to have painted a portrait of the contemporary religious scene which would be recognized as well-proportioned by English readers. I am too new at the job for that. My “discovery of England,” as Stephen Leacock would call it, is barely two years old. But I have perhaps been able to furnish the American reader desiring a brief “conducted tour” of English theology with a rough map of the territory to be explored together with some indication of the outstanding landmarks which he simply must not miss.

It will be noticed that I have given particular attention to the *liberal* tendencies in contemporary English theology. This is for a special and somewhat personal reason. Ever since my *Realistic Theology* was published, two years ago, I have been assailed as a reactionary because I announced—I thought, with proper regrets and appropriate eulogies!—that liberal theology in America was now deceased. I meant to suggest that what has come to be called “realism”

was the true heir of liberalism, and stood in vital continuity with the liberal spirit, attitude, and method of approach, however it might differ from the recent Modernistic system of theology which has “had its day and ceased to be.” What my critics have urged most vigorously against me—perhaps not without reason—is that I do not distinguish clearly between liberalism as a full-fledged system of theology, and liberalism as a method and attitude, which might survive the demise of all the favorite liberal doctrines of recent times. Nothing could be further from my intention than to discourage the growth of the liberal spirit in those who are still struggling in the chains of dogmatism, even though I now hold many views which used to be regarded as “conservative.” Without the liberal spirit, any system of religious teaching is in danger of ossifying, and hanging like a millstone about the neck of its adherents. What Lacordaire once said of himself, I should be glad in this sense to say of myself: “I hope to die a penitent Christian and an impenitent liberal!” But I believe American liberals need to repent humbly of their recent theological sins, however proudly they may continue to maintain their faith in free enquiry.

All this is very hard to make clear in the abstract, but quite easy to make clear in the concrete; and this book on English theology enables me to express it concretely. To all those who have been scandalized by my attack upon liberal theology in America, I can now say: “See what has happened in England, where the crisis of liberalism occurred in 1907, much earlier

than here. A particular school of liberal theology, based upon monistic idealism and divine immanence, *has* died. It was just as dead there, years ago, as it is now in America, where it has only just died. But the liberal spirit has survived the death of this particular body of divinity and expresses itself in new forms—some of them derived from much earlier schools of liberal thought, others directly springing from the attempt to grapple with new problems. Even where former liberals have gone over to conservatism, they have carried much of their liberal spirit with them, and it is this *liberalism-gone-into-solution* in the Catholic and Protestant traditions which is largely responsible for the new spirit of unity between them. That, or something like it, is what I hope and believe is going to happen to liberalism in American theology."

The substance of the following pages was originally given as five lectures on the Swander Foundation at the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church, U. S. A. in Lancaster, Pa. I have to thank President Richards and his colleagues for many courtesies during my stay there. The lectures were afterward repeated, with various modifications, at the Down-Town College of Religion (Cleveland), the Texas Pastors' School (Southern Methodist University, Dallas), and the Union Theological Seminary's Summer Conference for Ministers (New York). At all these places, criticisms were offered which helped me to amend many mistakes, and for which I hereby render my thanks. I am especially indebted to Professor F. W. Buckler of Oberlin for criticizing the manuscript of Chapter I, to

Dr. Peter A. Bertocci of Bates College for criticizing the manuscript of Chapter III, to Dr. Cyril Richardson of Union Theological Seminary for criticizing several extensive passages and to the following publishing houses, for permission to quote from their publications: The Oxford University Press; Longmans, Green and Company; D. Appleton-Century Company; Harcourt, Brace and Company; Doubleday, Doran and Company; The Macmillan Company; Alfred A. Knopf; and Charles Scribner's Sons. The Introduction and Conclusion were printed in the spring (1936) issue of *Christendom*, with the understanding that they constituted part of a forthcoming book. (See "British Leadership in Theology.") I am, as always, greatly indebted to my wife for the preparation of the typescript. To the many English friends who submitted to my catechizing when I was familiarizing myself with the English situation and planning my book, in the summers of 1934 and 1935, I offer hearty thanks. I shall be glad if the book they have helped me to write really facilitates the flow of thought and increases good feeling between the Old Country and the New.

New York, July 20, 1936

INTRODUCTION

THERE are some indications today that the intellectual leadership of Western Christendom is about to pass from Germany to England; and that American Protestant thought, in particular, is beginning to look to English rather than to German theology for help in the solving of its problems.

Such a shift in leadership would not be unprecedented. For more than a century after the Reformation, Germany (inclusive of the neighbouring territories of Switzerland and Alsace) continued to be the main centre from which progressive theological ideas were propagated, in ever-widening circles. It was in Wittenberg and Augsburg, Zürich and Strasbourg, that the germinal thoughts originated, which later were carried to Scotland and England by way of Geneva and Amsterdam, and finally to America by groups of zealous Nonconformists. These were the lines along which the spread of Protestantism itself took place; and along these lines waves of fresh inspiration continued to pass for several generations. The last of these waves was the Pietist movement of the late seventeenth century, which spread to England through the influence of Moravianism upon John Wesley, and there created a new type of Protestantism, English Evangelicalism, which proved to surpass German Pietism in self-propagating power.

But even before the rise of Evangelicalism, England had already begun to show an original genius in the field of religious thought. The scientific discoveries of

Boyle and Newton, at the close of the seventeenth century, had started a wave of bold and stimulating religious speculation which—whether we like or dislike its general trend—must be regarded as something much more vital than the conventional, unimaginative scholasticism into which German theology had fallen at the same period. Throughout the eighteenth century, when rationalism and evangelicalism were the prevailing tendencies, England held the intellectual leadership of the Christian world. English Evangelicalism, not German Pietism, changed the whole life and thought of the American colonies; English rationalism penetrated the Continent by way of France, and at length, having caused two great political revolutions and a vast amount of theological discussion, roused Immanuel Kant from his “dogmatic slumbers”—whereupon the sceptre of intellectual sovereignty passed back again to Germany.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the current of progressive religious thought was again, as in the period after the Reformation, flowing out from Germany through England to America. In the first half of the century, German theology was so far advanced beyond England and America in its new Kantian idealism and its new science of Biblical criticism that it was regarded with superstitious fear by many English and American theologians. The mere mention of names like Lessing and Herder, Schleiermacher and Hegel made us vaguely uneasy; while at the name of David Friedrich Strauss our teeth chattered with fright, and we were disposed to mutter phrases from

the Prayer-Book or the Westminster Catechism to exorcise that demonic influence. Nevertheless, German theology steadily advanced upon us, by devious paths. Coleridge and Carlyle disseminated German ideas in England, and Victor Cousin in France. Through men like Emerson, Theodore Parker and Horace Bushnell, these ideas reached America. Hegelianism had a great revival in Britain and America, led by T. H. Green and the brothers Caird, after its vogue had nearly disappeared in Germany.

Roughly speaking, England accepted German ideas (with reservations) some twenty or thirty years after their appearance in Germany, while America accepted them (with further reservations) after at least another decade had passed. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the lag began to lessen. The rise of Darwinism and the difficulties of Evangelical orthodoxy disposed both English and American theologians to open their minds to new constructive ideas; while the rise of Ritschlianism in Germany brought into prominence a school of theology more congenial to the practical Anglo-Saxon mind than any other German theology, before or since. In the eighties, when Ritschl and Lotze were teaching at Göttingen, and throughout the next two decades, when Adolf Harnack was the centre of a great galaxy of scholars at Berlin, the influx of British and American students was enormous, and the direct, immediate influence of German theology upon British and American thought was at its maximum.

It would be an exaggeration to say that the World

War itself transferred theological leadership from Germany to England, but a considerable change is observable from that time on. The War diverted the stream of American students temporarily to centers like Paris, Strasbourg and Edinburgh, and sent considerable numbers of European students to America for the first time. In the decade after the War, relations were resumed with the German universities, but not quite on the same scale. Long overdue translations of Schleiermacher's *The Christian Faith* and Troeltsch's *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches and Groups* were made during this period. Rudolf Otto's great book, *The Idea of the Holy*, made a powerful impression; while the Barthian "theology of crisis" aroused a great amount of curiosity, puzzlement, opposition, and eager discussion.

Yet with all the interest that has been shown in the Barthian theology, there has appeared a certain sense of alienation and remoteness, making it hard for American and German theologians to understand each other, while driving British and American theologians closer together. Particularly since the National Socialist revolution of 1933, it has become increasingly difficult for theological discussion to go on across the German frontier. German preoccupation with the domestic crisis of Church and State is so intense that it colours all theological terms with a special meaning which baffles foreign interpreters. At ecumenical gatherings, Americans are inclined to accuse Germans of running to shelter behind traditional theological formulas in

order to escape the stress of contemporary difficulties; while Germans accuse Americans of having abandoned Christianity altogether, for a modern "activistic" religion based upon faith in human effort and Yankee ingenuity. A German theological student recently returned from America has said bluntly, in an article in the *Theologische Blätter*, that "in the last analysis the whole religious-theological problem of America takes the form of a problem in the cure of souls"—the problem, namely, of inducing in us a deeper sense of "guilt, sin, and responsibility."¹ There are many of us who would be receptive to this sobering judgement were it not for the almost irresistible impulse to retort, "Physician, heal thyself!"

I should not wish to contribute to the widening of this gulf of misunderstanding by suggesting that we should now summarily drop relations with Germany, and turn to England for guidance. I believe American theology needs what German theology still has to give, and I am likewise convinced that we have something to contribute in return. Their renewed loyalty to the original principles of the Reformation is needed to balance our fresh, forward-looking apprehension of contemporary actuality. Not only from Karl Barth—whose vogue in Germany is on the wane, since his expulsion from the country—but from Karl Heim, Althaus and a host of younger men, we should continue to learn. Even those of us who refuse to listen to any voice coming from Nazi Germany must listen to voices from

¹ Ernst Oschner, *Gedanken zur amerikanischen Theologie*, *Theologische Blätter*, 14th Jahrgang, No. 9, September, 1935, pp. 218-227.

Zürich and Strasbourg.² But I believe we now badly need the services of the English mind, to mediate between us. At international Student Movement conferences and theological conferences alike, it is noteworthy that the English delegates, while siding on the whole with the Americans against the Germans, are yet close enough to the German position to act as its interpreters. This of itself puts English theology in a position to guide both the parties between which it mediates. But this is not all. Because of its unbroken contact with Catholic tradition, English theology has developed distinctive traits of its own, which fit it for leadership in the present crisis of Christendom. In America we have gone so far from Luther and Calvin that the way back is almost cut off, and it is extremely improbable that any such revival of Reformation doctrine as is going on in Germany would be possible amongst us. But if we cannot go back we may yet go forward under English leadership, to a new "Evangelical Catholicism" in which the values of the Protestant Reformation and of Modern Liberal Protestantism would be included and transcended.

It is my hope that the following discussion of Contemporary English Theology may contribute to this forward movement. I have chosen to discuss "English" rather than "British" theology, largely because of the greater importance in England than in Scotland or Wales of that remarkable union of the Catholic and Protestant traditions which is the distinctive mark of

² Emil Brunner and Fernand Ménégoz—both deeply influenced by German ideas.

the Church of England. That is of course not to minimize the value of Scottish and Welsh theology, nor actually to leave them out. In dealing with contemporary English theology, we shall have to consider both the Anglican and the Free Churches; and in the Free Churches the influence of Scotland and Wales is very strong. Such Scotsmen as John Oman and A. E. Garvie, for example, have played an important part in shaping current tendencies both in the English Free Churches and in Anglicanism. My motive for taking the English Free Churches into consideration is partly this, that I wish to show the possibility of absorbing much Catholic tradition in theology without becoming either Roman Catholic or Episcopalian. I do not expect American Protestantism to go over to Rome, nor to submit to Episcopal reordination; I do expect it to become more Catholic-minded.

CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH THEOLOGY

CHAPTER I

PERSISTENT TRADITIONS IN ENGLISH THEOLOGY

IF ENGLISH theology did not embody persistent traditions, it would be most un-English.

Everywhere in England, beneath the surface veneer of modern standardized and mechanized civilization, one is aware of a reverence for time-hallowed customs, good old names and phrases, ancient institutions and ceremonials, long-accepted beliefs. Mr. J. B. Priestley has lately told us that there are three Englands: the Old England "of the cathedrals and minsters and manor houses and inns, of Parson and Squire"; the nineteenth-century industrial England of factories and slag-heaps, and "thousands of rows of little houses all alike"; and finally, a new American England which has grown up since the war, an England of arterial highways, filling stations, giant cinemas, wireless, and Woolworths.¹ Of the three, there can be no question which is the most fundamental. Any contemporary institution which is not somehow deeply rooted in the soil of Old England, is insecure, and apt to shrivel and die overnight. Consciously or unconsciously, it is for the ancient values and verities embodied in the customs and traditions of the land that every true Englishman lives and is ready to die. So long as these are preserved, he is willing to tolerate many discomforts in his external manner of life; if these are threatened, no amount of "modern

¹ J. B. Priestley, *English Journey*, pp. 316-323.

improvements" will compensate him for their loss. Traditions are the life-blood of England; all change is but the result of the attempt to preserve and extend them.

That is not to say that the Englishman is unable to adapt himself. As we all know, English civilization has been almost appallingly dynamic in the last few centuries. It has run all over the world, and taken on all sorts of surprising modifications in the process. For the sake of keeping his private life and his personal integrity intact the Englishman will often accept revolutionary change in the whole framework of his society. Viewed from without, the history of English constitutional law or English civilization in general seems to present a kaleidoscopic series of temporary arrangements bound together by no inner logic. Great lumps of ancient law and custom survive unassimilated in an alien modern environment, as legal fictions and apparently meaningless ceremonials. Yet viewed from within, more sympathetically, English history may be seen as the persistent outworking of a single deep-rooted disposition: to love and to protect all good old things, making only such modifications in them as are positively required by changed conditions, and retaining as much of them as can possibly be made place for in the new order.

Ely Cathedral might be taken as a symbol for the history of English theology. It once had a high central tower, which fell in the fourteenth century, ruining a large portion of the edifice. In America, we should have been disposed to tear down the remaining walls,

clear the ground and begin all over on a modernized plan. In Continental Europe, if their architects behaved like their Barthian theologians, they might have endeavoured to restore the original top-heavy tower. Not so in England. Alan of Walsingham, faced with the task of restoring the ruined cathedral of Ely, hit upon a bold ingenious scheme. He left the main structural lines as they were, but replaced the square central crossing with an octagonal one, crowned with a beautiful "lantern" of well-seasoned wood, much fairer than the tower of stone it replaced. That is the typical English way of doing things, in theology as in architecture or politics. It does not always result so happily as at Ely. Sometimes the old structure and the modern adaptation are really incongruous and basically inconsistent with each other. Sometimes beliefs are cherished long after they have outlived their power to inspire or to convince. But be that as it may, your Englishman never throws away any structure, of stone or of thought, which can possibly be rebuilt so as to stand erect and continue to be used. *Adaptive traditionalism* is his chief characteristic.

We shall not understand the present state of English theology unless we first take note of the persistent traditions which determine its main structural lines. This done, we shall then be in a position to see how the peculiar theological tendencies of our own generation result from the attempt to maintain these traditions unchanged as far as possible, while at the same time adapting them to the almost catastrophic changes in the world situation which have come to pass in the last

twenty years. Among these persistent traditions there are three which stand out as basic. In order of seniority, they are the *Catholic*, the *Protestant*, and the *liberal* traditions. Each has at least two variant forms: Catholicism—*Roman* or *Anglican*; Protestantism—*Puritan* or *Evangelical*; liberalism—*Platonic*, *scientific*, or *idealistic*. Let us first proceed to show how the Catholic tradition has persisted in English theology.

I. THE CATHOLIC TRADITION

When Matthew Parker was consecrated as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1559, by order of Queen Elizabeth, the Church of England became finally independent of Rome, but it did not cease to be Catholic. Two of the bishops who participated in the ceremony had themselves been consecrated as Roman Catholic bishops. Every effort was made to accommodate Roman Catholics within the terms of the Elizabethan Church Settlement, and many of them remained within the Church of England, even after the Pope issued his Bull of Excommunication against the Queen eleven years later. The Queen's appointment of new bishops, her assumption of the title of Supreme Governor, her action in requiring church attendance of her subjects, and prescribing the form of worship, were all referred as far as possible to established precedents; and the Church of Rome was described as "an usurped foreign power and authority"² which had upset the traditional order of the ancient English Church.

² *Act of Supremacy*, 1559. Tanner, *Tudor Constitutional Documents*, p. 131.

There was much in the preceding thousand years of English church history that could be adduced in support of this official view. The Catholicity of the old *Ecclesia Anglicana* was beyond dispute. If some of her saints were peculiar to herself, others, like St. Anselm and St. Thomas à Becket, were celebrated throughout Christendom. And yet during the greater part of her history she was characterized by a certain *independence* in her relations with Rome, and a certain *dependence* in her relations with the British crown. Before St. Augustine founded the Roman see of Canterbury in 597, there was already a British church, whose origins are too remote to trace; and the Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons was quite as much the work of the Celtic missionaries from Iona and Lindisfarne as it was the work of the Roman missionaries from Canterbury. In spite of the rapid growth of papalism after the Norman Conquest, in spite of the humble penance of Henry II after the murder of Thomas à Becket, in spite of King John's surrender of his whole domain to the Pope as a vassal state, the administration of the Church of England more generally reflected the influence of London than of Rome; and her bishops were actually selected by the crown, for reasons of state, even while Rome thundered against "lay investiture" and insisted on the necessity of the ecclesiastical rubber stamp. With few intermissions, the English kings carried on a protracted struggle against Roman political claims and financial exactions, against legal exemptions for the clergy, and against the power and wealth of the monastic establishments. When Henry VIII broke off all

relations with the Pope, ceased to pay “Peter’s pence,” dissolved the monasteries, and plundered the tomb of that arch-Romanist, Thomas à Becket, he did what several of his predecessors would have done if they had dared. The Church of England under him was only a little less Roman and not a whit less Catholic than under Alfred or Edward III. Genuine Protestantism was not widespread in England until the reign of Edward VI, and did not take deep root in English soil until Queen Mary tried to crush it out by persecution. In the Elizabethan Settlement, Protestant and Catholic elements were about equally balanced. Thenceforth, to eliminate Catholicism completely—as the Puritans tried to do under the Commonwealth—would be to destroy “the Church of England, as by law established.”³

In the long period between the reign of Elizabeth and the rise of Tractarianism in the nineteenth century, the Catholic tradition remained an ineradicable part of Anglicanism, but often expressed itself in a defence of the Anglican compromise rather than in any form of isolated action. It was Protestantism that generally represented the more active and aggressive principle in Anglicanism during this period; the Catholic element showed its power more typically in the resistance of the Church to all radical innovations and violent extremes. Hooker’s fair-minded defence of the Anglican polity against Puritan criticisms, and Butler’s steadfast resistance to the extreme rationalism of the Deists and

³ An example of this union of Catholic and Protestant elements is to be found in the *combination* of the sentences used in the more Catholic Prayer-Book of 1549, in the administration of the sacramental elements, with those used in the more Protestant Prayer-Book of 1552.

the extreme emotionalism of the Methodists, may be cited as evidence of the persistence of a certain Catholic-mindedness in the Church of England; but neither Hooker nor Butler could be described as a pronounced Catholic.

The so-called "High Church" party which came into prominence just before the English Civil War was more aggressively and more pronouncedly Catholic, but it was very different from modern Anglo-Catholicism. It was mainly concerned to defend the episcopal and national character of the Church of England against the attacks of the Puritans and the Scottish Presbyterians. Archbishop Laud, its founder, supported an Arminian rather than a Calvinistic interpretation of the Thirty-nine Articles; and he favored a more ritualistic, sacramentarian type of worship than that advocated by the Puritans; but the party spirit aroused by his stand on these issues was as nothing by comparison with the storm of opposition which greeted his attempt to impose the English Prayer-Book upon the Scotch, and his support of Charles I and the "divine right of kings" in the disastrous contest with Parliament. When political passions mount to the point of civil war, theology and worship get lost in the scuffle. "High Church" now became equivalent to "Cavalier"; King Charles was venerated by High Churchmen as "king and martyr." After the flight of James II, the High Church party became Jacobite. Many of its leaders, the "Non-Jurors," refused to swear allegiance to William and Mary and were deprived of their living. In the reign of Queen Anne, there was a revival of High-

Churchmanship under the lead of a certain Dr. Sach-everell, who was impeached by the Whig government for attacking Whig policies in a violent political sermon, and thus became a popular hero. From this time on Toryism was characteristic of the High Church party, while its opponents favored toleration for dissenters, and other Whig measures. Nineteenth-century Tractarianism differs from the old High Church movement fundamentally in its desire for a greater degree of ecclesiastical independence of the State. Whereas Archbishop Laud, in his contest with the Puritan Parliament, could count heavily upon the combined strength of the Episcopal Convocation and the Stuart king, his nineteenth-century successors faced a radically different situation. Convocation had long since ceased to meet, its powers having been absorbed by the crown; and the crown now exercised all its powers only with the advice and consent of a highly secularized Parliament. Parliament still represented "the world," for Catholic-minded Anglicans; but they could no longer combat "the world" with the aid of powerful elements in the State, and had therefore to assume a more hostile attitude to the State as well.

Keble's sermon on "National Apostasy," from which the Tractarian movement is commonly dated (July 14, 1833) was essentially a declaration of ecclesiastical independence inspired by state intervention in church affairs. Catholic Emancipation and the Reform Bill of 1832 had affronted the Tory principles of a group of young High-Churchmen, and led them to the conviction that the Church of England was in a parlous plight

in the hands of an irreligious, Whiggish, and Erastian government. The much-advertised “union of Throne and Altar,” from which so much had been hoped in the days after the fall of Napoleon, was proving a hollow sham both in France and in England, and subjecting the Church to the State in a most humiliating fashion. Soon, if the logic of Arnold and other Broad-Churchmen should prevail, all Englishmen (save perhaps Jews, Romanists and Unitarians) would be accepted as church members upon presentation of their birth certificates, and the Church would become a mere department of the State!

But if the occasion of the Tractarian outbreak was political, the effect of it was theological. Just as the contemporary German conflict of Church and State has driven the Lutheran churches back upon their primary theological principles, and evoked a flood of new theological “confessions,” so it was with the authors of *Tracts for the Times* a century ago. Seeking eagerly for some time-honoured theological precedents on which to base their faith in the dignity and spiritual independence of the Church of England, they discovered their spiritual ancestors in the “Caroline divines” of pre-Puritan England and the ancient Fathers of the undivided Catholic Church; and in harmony with these authorities they formulated three principles which have defined the Anglo-Catholic position ever since:

(a) that Jesus Christ founded not merely a *faith* but a living and witness-bearing *institution*, with assurance that it would ever be guided “into all truth”; (b) that He enjoined symbolic worship by the Sacraments as the channel of “covenanted”

grace; (c) that it is thus contrary to His will and a source of manifold error for men to depend either on individual illumination and reasoning or on isolated scrutiny of the Bible, rather than on the continuous witness of the Church reaching back to the message of those who accompanied with the Lord.⁴

Many changes have come over the Anglo-Catholic movement in the last hundred years. It has become much more highly ritualistic than Keble or Pusey would have approved of. It has introduced many innovations which have been denounced as "Romish" and prosecuted as illegal: the reservation and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the cult of the Blessed Virgin and the saints. On the other hand, it has encountered critical difficulties with respect to the intention of Jesus Christ to institute sacraments or to found a church at all—difficulties which have led some Anglo-Catholics to redefine their position in a modernistic way which might have shocked the conservative authors of "Tracts for the Times." Both on the theological and on the social front, modern Anglo-Catholics have shown that it is possible to be "High and Broad" instead of "High and Narrow"; they are as well versed in historical criticism, natural science, and radical social thought as any of their contemporaries. But they have never lost their faith in the three fundamentals above named: the continuity of the *Church* (consisting in the valid succession of bishops), the central importance of the *Sacraments*, and the trustworthiness of churchly *Tradition* as a corrective to the vagaries of private judgement.

⁴ H. L. Stewart, *A Century of Anglo-Catholicism*, p. ix; cf. pp. 22-24. New York, Oxford University Press, 1929.

It would be a grave oversight to terminate our sketch of the Catholic tradition in English theology without some further mention of the place of *Roman* Catholicism in modern England. While a good many Roman Catholics were absorbed into the Church of England at the time of the Elizabethan Settlement, there were many so-called "Popish Recusants" who continued to be the objects of legislative attention because of their refusal to accept the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity, and their non-attendance upon the services of the Established Church. Such persons were forbidden by the Act of 1593 to travel more than five miles from their place of residence, upon pain of forfeiture of all their "goods and chattels . . . lands, tenements and hereditaments . . . rents and annuities."⁵ In the Toleration Act of 1689, only those religious bodies were permitted legal title to existence whose members were ready to swear allegiance to the King as head of the Church as well as the State, and to condemn the Roman doctrine of Transubstantiation as blasphemous. Not until 1829, when the Catholic Emancipation Bill was passed, were Roman Catholics granted the right to vote and hold office. From this time on, the spread of Romanism in England was rapid. John Henry Newman was the prototype of many Anglo-Catholics who found the Anglican *via media* difficult to follow, and having accepted the Catholic Church as their spiritual home, came at length to locate its capital at Rome instead of Canterbury. The romantic appreciation of mediæval culture and Catholic tradition was leading

⁵ Tanner, *Tudor Constitutional Documents*, pp. 159-163.

men back to the Roman Catholic fold in every European country throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. If the romantic mediævalism of Sir Walter Scott and Samuel Taylor Coleridge had its most characteristic issue in Oxford Tractarianism, it could not but lead some back to the ancient Church which was the fountain-head of mediævalism. It would be hard to exaggerate the influence of these converts in preparing the way for a revised estimate of Roman Catholic theology. We shall see in our next chapter that the most important individual influence upon contemporary English theology—both Anglican and Nonconformist—is that of a great Roman Catholic thinker, Baron Friedrich von Hügel. Such a phenomenon would have been inconceivable a century ago. It was Newman and Benson and Tyrrell and a host of other Anglican converts to Rome who made possible von Hügel's great vogue.

2. THE PROTESTANT TRADITION

If the Protestant tradition is not so ancient as the Catholic in English history, it is just as natively English, and just as firmly entrenched in existing laws and institutions. John Wycliffe, the great forerunner of the Continental Reformers, preached against the Pope as "Antichrist" and denied the Roman doctrine of Transubstantiation two centuries before Martin Luther—and died in his bed, thanks to the weakness of the divided papacy and the protection of the English king. His followers, the "Lollards," went even further than their leader in the direction of a strict Puritanical ex-

clusion of all non-Biblical practices from the Catholic heritage; and so many were martyred for their faith that the movement was driven into secrecy. The Lollards are the real authors of the English Reformation; Henry VIII merely carried out, for reasons of state, the main lines of reform which had been originally projected by Wycliffe, and favorably considered by his royal patron, Edward III.

It was after the death of Henry VIII, during the short but eventful reign of his son Edward VI, that Protestantism first became a decisive factor in the religious life of England. English Lollardry had now been reinforced by the broadened stream of its own influence, returning from the Continent. The martyrdom of John Huss, sentenced to death for Wycliffite views at the Council of Constance in 1414, had sown the seeds of Protestantism in Bohemia, Switzerland, and Germany; and now that England was free from papal jurisdiction, Protestant refugees and preachers began to arrive from across the Channel. Pre-eminent among them were Martin Bucer from Strasbourg and Peter Martyr from Basel, who became Regius Professors at Cambridge and Oxford, and John Knox from Geneva, who was offered and refused the bishopric of Rochester—a narrow escape for England! These men were strongly critical of the moderately revised Prayer-Book of 1549, and instrumental in the adoption of the Second Prayer-Book of Edward VI (1552), which is the high-water mark of Protestantism in Anglican ritual, as the Forty-two Articles adopted the

next year are the high-water mark of Calvinism in Anglican theology.

The sufferings of all non-Romanists in the reign of Queen Mary did much to drive them together; and in the Elizabethan Church Settlement, as we have seen, Catholic and Protestant Englishmen were accommodated within a common church establishment. For a time it seemed as though the dispute between Puritans and other Anglicans, over such matters as the wearing of surplices and the continuance of the episcopal form of church government, might be resolved into a mere struggle of opinion within the Church, one party exerting pressure through Parliament in the interest of Presbyterianism and plain worship, while the other exerted pressure through the King and Convocation in the interest of Episcopacy and ornate ritual. Eventually, however, both parties lost patience and came to an open break.

The *first* step towards disunion was taken by a group of Puritans who reverted in 1581 to the ancient Wycliffite idea that all dominion in the Church is founded on grace, and belongs only to the spiritually regenerate. These "Independents," as they were called, rejected Presbyterianism as decisively as they rejected Episcopacy, and organized themselves into little Congregational conventicles of co-equal members—strictly illegal organizations, several of whose leaders suffered the death penalty before the group finally emigrated to Holland, and then to Massachusetts. The *second* step towards disunion was forced by the other side. The Stuart monarchs, having bitter memories of the indig-

nities imposed upon Mary Queen of Scots by her Presbyterian mentors, adopted the slogan, "No bishop, no king"; and with the aid of the High Church party, drove the bulk of the Puritans into armed rebellion under the leadership of Parliament. After the Civil War and the Commonwealth, it was impossible for most Presbyterians to return to the Church of England; so with the restoration of Charles II a new Nonconformist sect was born. Meanwhile the Baptists had branched off from the Independents, and the Society of Friends had arisen to protest against the general violence and contention of the times. All of these Protestant sects suffered persecution during the Stuart Restoration, and finally won toleration under Their Protestant Majesties, William and Mary.

The Puritan tradition has persisted as a tendency in English religious thought, both within and without the Church of England. Theologically, it may be identified with Calvinism, which is not only the traditional creed of the Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Baptists, but in a moderate form is embedded in the Thirty-nine Articles of the Established Church. While the extreme rigours of double predestination and total depravity have gradually been modified by the influence of Arminianism, the creed of Geneva and Westminster still continues to furnish food for thought in English theology—as we shall see when we come to discuss such a book as John Oman's *Grace and Personality*.

In the eighteenth century, the Protestant movement in England passed into a new phase under the leadership of John Wesley and George Whitefield. The

Church of England failed to come to terms with this new militant movement, and the Methodist Church was forced to swell the ranks of Nonconformity; but a powerful Evangelical party remained within the Establishment, taking the place of the old Puritan party.⁶ Henceforth, "Low Church" and "Evangelical" became synonymous. The Baptists, too, became in the main an Evangelical rather than a Puritan sect—though perhaps less so than in America. The Methodists and the other Evangelicals have always been more noted for their religious fervour and philanthropic activity than for their theological ability, and yet they may be said to have established a new tradition in Protestant religious thought. By their emphasis upon "new birth" as the central fact in the Christian life, and upon the deity and atoning work of Christ as the indispensable ground of the new birth, they have created a characteristic emphasis whose effect upon English theology has been very marked. The extraordinary attention which has been given to the Person and Work of Christ in nineteenth-century English theology is undoubtedly due to the influence of Wesleyan Evangelicalism. The gradual replacement of old-line Calvinism by more Arminian views is also indirectly due to Evangelical influence. It is hard to profess belief in limited Atonement when you are eagerly engaged in universal evangelization.

Contemporary English Protestantism is a blend of the Puritan and Evangelical traditions. It is a powerful

⁶ The Anglican Evangelicals generally followed the Calvinism of Whitefield, while the Methodists followed the Arminianism of Wesley.

factor in English life, being represented both by the Federal Council of Free Churches, by various widespread religious movements, and by the Low Church party in the Church of England, which can always be counted on to protest against the "Roman innovations" of the Anglo-Catholics. The influence of Scottish theology and theologians—such, for example, as the late Principal H. R. Mackintosh of Edinburgh—upon English theology proves that the Puritan tradition still lives; while the work of the Salvation Army, the Keswick Movement, and the Oxford Group Movement ("Buchmanism") proves that the Evangelical tradition is still able to shape for itself new forms of expression. But besides all the parties and movements so far enumerated, there are some that defy classification as either Catholic or Protestant in the classical sense: the Unitarian churches and the Modern Churchmen's Union. To the analysis of the *liberal* tradition which underlies these remaining groups and tendencies, we now turn.

3. THE LIBERAL TRADITION

Unitarianism occupies a less influential place in England than in America. In view of the crushing legal disabilities under which it has laboured, it is a marvel that it exists at all. It was still a capital offence, in the middle of the seventeenth century, to profess any of those Socinian or Arian views which from time to time trickled in from Holland; though the last actual executions took place in 1609, when an edition of the *Racovian Catechism* was tactfully dedicated to James I. The Toleration Act of 1689 still excluded Unitarians

as well as Roman Catholics; only in 1813 were the penal acts against Unitarians finally repealed. But meanwhile a good deal of liberty had grown up in Nonconformist conventicles and colleges, which were in practice allowed to settle their own standards of orthodoxy; and before the end of the eighteenth century a Unitarian denomination existed, largely recruited from the ranks of Independency, and led by men like Joseph Priestley, Thomas Belsham and Theophilus Lindsey. The greatest name in the history of English Unitarianism is that of James Martineau (1805-1900), whose services to religious philosophy and appreciative attitude toward Christian orthodoxy did much to win respect for a hitherto despised denomination. The *Hibbert Journal*, under the editorship of Dr. L. P. Jacks, has become more than a Unitarian publication; it is a general forum of religious discussion in which all parties are glad to participate. Manchester College, Oxford, under Unitarian auspices, has brought the denomination into a relation of vital give-and-take with the general flow of English religious thought, just as Mansfield College, Oxford, has done for the Congregationalists and Westminster College, Cambridge, for the Presbyterians.

Much more important than any liberal denomination, and much more pervasive in its influence upon theology, has been that general current of liberal thought which took its rise in the Revival of Learning under Erasmus, Colet and Thomas More, on the eve of the English Reformation, and has affected all the learned professions ever since, through the medium of

the great universities. Liberalism in this broad sense has in various forms and degrees invaded all religious bodies and parties in England, not excluding the Anglo-Catholics; and it has found an organ of its own in what is variously called the Latitudinarian, Broad Church or Modernist movement in the Church of England.

Between the two principal English universities, a certain difference has been noticeable ever since the Renaissance. Oxford, by comparison with Cambridge, has generally been "the home of lost causes," the defender of things ancient and honourable. While both universities were thoroughly regenerated under the influence of Colet and Erasmus, it was observable that the younger university offered less opposition to the change. As time went on, the *classical* aspect of the New Learning, and its passion for *litteræ humaniores*, came to predominate at Oxford, while *mathematics* and *natural science* came to predominate at Cambridge.

Platonism is traditionally indigenous at Cambridge; and Platonism is the nursing-mother of modern science. The "Cambridge Platonists" of the seventeenth century were more interested in ethics and theology than in science; but later on in the same century, Cambridge Platonism took a decisively scientific turn, which determined all the subsequent history of the university. Among her distinguished alumni the following stand out as typical of this persistent scientific interest: Francis Bacon, Newton, Malthus, Paley, Darwin. The period in which Cambridge scientific liberalism most powerfully affected British theology was the eighteenth

century, when Newtonian "natural philosophy" went hand in hand with the "natural theology" of Butler and Paley.

While Cambridge was espousing Platonism and natural science, Oxford remained loyal to Aristotle and the humanities. While the Cambridge Platonists were pleading for religious toleration and the inward witness of mystic experience, Oxford was supporting Archbishop Laud and King Charles in their policy of High Church uniformity and external authoritarianism. While Cambridge scientists and theologians played leading parts in the rationalistic movement of the eighteenth century, Oxford gave birth to the Methodist movement, which was opposed to rationalism. But with the nineteenth-century Romantic reaction against rationalistic modes of thought, Oxford's opportunity for the intellectual leadership came. *The* Oxford movement of the nineteenth century, of course, was the conservative Tractarian movement whose influence we have already considered. But in all European countries, Romanticism proved to have liberal as well as conservative implications. The Broad Church movement, against which the Tractarians revolted, became as decidedly Romantic as its great antagonist; and with the beginning of the Hegelian phase of the movement in the eighties under the leadership of T. H. Green, the capital of the Broad Church movement may be said to have been fixed at Oxford. From that time on, Oxford idealism became as traditional as Cambridge scientific empiricism.

It would be quite artificial, of course, to confine

either the Platonic, the scientific, or the idealistic type of liberalism to a single *habitat*. Movements of thought can never be so confined, nor so sharply isolated from one another. Let us therefore drop all local tags and labels, and consider the liberal movement as a whole, noting its underlying unity, and tracing its varieties to their intellectual rather than their geographical sources. It will be necessary to make a somewhat more careful analysis than in the case of Catholicism and Protestantism, since the tenets of liberalism are subtler and less familiar than those of its orthodox rivals, and since the great period of liberal theology—roughly speaking, from 1850 to the World War—is the period immediately preceding and profoundly affecting the contemporary period with which we are principally concerned.

Liberalism first entered the lists, as a well-defined movement in the Church of England, under the name of “Latitudinarianism”—an uncomplimentary and accusatory epithet which was applied to the Cambridge Platonists in the seventeenth century. The meaning of the term is substantially identical with that of the modern term “Broad Church,” the main difference being that in modern times it has become relatively respectable instead of disreputable to be “broad”! The adjectives “broad” and “latitudinarian” have reference to a double breadth which has always characterized English liberalism: in the first place, *breadth of mind*, willingness to accept any truth, however startling, however unauthoritative in its source, if it can commend itself on its intrinsic merits; in the second place, *breadth of tolerance*, willingness to give “latitude” in the Church

of England for a wide range of honest dissent, and to welcome all men of sincerity and goodwill within her hospitable walls, without inquiring too closely into their theological opinions.⁷

If English liberalism has remained consistent with itself in its drive for free thought and wide toleration, it has arrived at different convictions in different periods; and in each period a tradition has been founded which is still extant.

The first of these traditions is the *Platonic* or *mystic*

⁷ Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*, written long before the term "latitudinarian" was invented, might perhaps be considered a classical source of English religious liberalism in both these senses. More's tolerance and open-mindedness seem oddly exotic and out of place in the reign of Henry VIII; indeed, he failed to live up to them himself; but his liberal principles have slowly and steadily won their way in the Church of England, while the Church of Rome—which has lately exalted him to the rank of saint and martyr—has consistently opposed his principles. Today, thanks to the teaching of John Locke in the eighteenth century, thanks to the firmness of many religious-minded scientists and Biblical scholars in the nineteenth century, who have preferred to suffer persecution rather than to forsake either the Church or their hard-won opinions, there is room in the Church of England for a wide variety of theological parties and schools. The fact that the Anglo-Catholics are tolerated is itself evidence of the partial triumph of the latitudinarian principles. From Sir Thomas More and the Cambridge Platonists to Dr. Major and the Modern Churchmen's Union, the liberal movement presents itself as one continuous determined effort to secure for English churchmen the right of free thought and speech in matters theological—a right parallel to that which is recognized in the political forum of Hyde Park, where one may denounce the King and Parliament under protection of the police. Only at Hyde Park are dissenting opinions voiced with more freedom than that of which Dean Inge avails himself in his *Outspoken Essays*, or Bishops Barnes and Hensen in their occasional utterances on controversial questions. More's *Utopia* has not yet come to England, as the furore over L. P. Jacks and his Unitarian sermon in Liverpool Cathedral bears witness; but the official dogmas of the Church of England are interpreted as broad boundaries, within which wide liberty is permissible, and whose exact location is a matter for periodic debate.

tradition, best represented by the Cambridge Platonists of the seventeenth century: Benjamin Whichcote, John Smith, Ralph Cudworth, Richard Cumberland and Henry More. Characteristic of this school is the conviction that goodness and wisdom are more deeply rooted aspects of the Godhead than arbitrary will; that, accordingly, we may assume we live in an intelligible world, whose laws are not tyrannically imposed, but immutably grounded in the nature of things, and intuitively discernible by every right-minded man. Behind this conviction is the long tradition of Neo-Platonic mysticism, transmitted through mediæval theology in the works of "Dionysius the Areopagite." Against all forms of external authoritarianism—both against the High Church dogmatism of Archbishop Laud and the Calvinistic arbitrariness of the Puritans—the Cambridge Platonists' appeal to direct intuitive insight was a powerful weapon of attack. The Quaker appeal to the "Inner Light," William Law's faith in a faculty of direct vision, Coleridge's doctrine of a higher "reason" which pierces deeper than mere "understanding," all stand in the line of this Platonic or mystic tradition; but the greatest revival of it in over two hundred years took place at the beginning of the twentieth century, when Dean Inge, Baron von Hügel and Evelyn Underhill began their epoch-making studies in Christian mysticism. We shall take Dean Inge as our contemporary spokesman for this type of liberalism.

The second great period of liberalism was the eighteenth century, when the *scientific tradition* first became firmly established. This period is generally

known as the age of *rationalism*; but this is confusing, since it suggests the prevalence of an *a priori*, deductive mode of thought, whereas the British tradition in natural philosophy and theology has always been *a posteriori* and inductive. The simplest way of identifying this type of liberalism is to recognize in it the effort to make theology conform as closely as possible to the methods and results of natural science. The most consistent exponents of scientific liberalism in the eighteenth century were the *Deists*, who found all the theology they needed in the conception of God as the skilled Contriver of the Newtonian world-machine, and who denied that the Bible could add anything of importance to those elevating thoughts that were inspired in them by the spectacle of the heavens. While churchmen universally opposed this negative conclusion of the Deists, they generally employed a method of argumentation which resembled that of their antagonists: having proved the existence of God from the evidences of wise contrivance in nature, they then proceeded to prove the truth of Revelation by the miracles and prophecies which attested its divine origin—all according to rules of evidence which would be acceptable in natural science, or in a court of law.⁸

In the nineteenth century this method of argumentation was continued in the last works of Paley and in the *Bridgewater Treatises*; but owing to the effect of the Kantian critiques and the changed temper of natural science in the latter part of the century, a new note

⁸ See Creed and Boys-Smith, *Religious Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 52-55 (Leslie) and 67-75 (Sherlock).

crept into the utterances of scientific liberalism: a note of modesty, tentativeness and inconclusiveness, well suggested by Dean Mansel's Bampton Lectures on *The Limits of Religious Thought*, or Romanes' *Thoughts on Religion*. These thinkers were faced with the thoroughgoing positivism and agnosticism of Mill and Spencer, Huxley and Leslie Stephen; their doubts and hesitations faithfully reflect the prevalent materialism of nineteenth-century scientific thought. In the present century, the overthrow of scientific materialism and the rise of the new physics have greatly restored the confidence of natural theologians, but have not destroyed the chastening effects of the period of agnosticism. For a contemporary example of scientific liberalism we shall turn to the Philosophical Theology of Dr. F. R. Tennant of Cambridge, which resembles Paley's Natural Theology in its resolute employment of scientific methods, but reflects the era of Darwin and Huxley in the cautious tentativeness of its conclusions.

The last of our three sub-types of liberalism is the *romantic* or *idealistic tradition*, to which the name of "Modernism" is often given. It resembles the Platonic school in the stress it sometimes lays upon intuition as a source of knowledge, and it has been deeply affected by the scientific evolutionism and Biblical criticism of the late nineteenth century; but it has its own characteristic conviction, by which it can always be distinguished: *that the world is organic—not mechanical, as Deism supposed—and God is immanent therein, as its animating Life and Reason*. Coleridge was the great disseminator in England of this type of liberalism,

whose remoter origin was of course German. His influence gave a certain tinge of Romantic idealism to the Tractarian movement itself; but the first important theologian to be entirely dominated by idealistic concepts was Frederick Denison Maurice. The truth on which he staked his whole message was the final unity of all men in God, who has become the Head of the race—the organic, immanent life-principle of a new humanity—through His Incarnate Word. The romantic idealism of Maurice, reinforced by the Hegelian idealism of T. H. Green and his successors, became the dominant theological trend in England during the first decade of the twentieth century. "Immanentalism" was the watchword of the day among the Modernists, as the eagle-eyed observers at the Vatican were not slow to point out. While the idealistic tradition still forms the background of a powerful trend in contemporary English theology, particularly at Oxford, the revulsion against certain features of it has been very marked in the last thirty years. Since Canon Streeter edited the symposium called *Foundations*, written by a group of Oxford men shortly before the War, the drift away from idealistic immanentalism and idealistic optimism has been continually more accentuated. The idealistic school has so far disintegrated at present that we shall not be able to single out any one outstanding representative of this type of liberalism, but shall be content to inquire what is becoming of it, and what is likely to succeed it.

Our analysis of the persistent traditions in English

theology suggests a plan for the study of the contemporary scene: to take up each of the three main traditions in turn, beginning with the liberal tradition which was so dominant before the World War, and note in each case what new modifications have occurred. It will be desirable to give a whole chapter to the analysis of the general causes which have led to these modifications, and another to the present status of the several varieties of liberalism, since liberal thought is the mobile factor which enables us most easily to chart the trend of the times. Then the present status of the Catholic and Protestant traditions will be considered in a fourth chapter, while the fifth and last will be devoted to a study of the "central" trend which seems now to be drawing all three of our persistent traditions together into a manifold unity.

CHAPTER II

PRE-WAR AND POST-WAR TENDENCIES

ANY RELIGIOUS system which had not undergone great changes in the last thirty years might safely be pronounced dead, without further investigation. The first test of theology in such a period of grave emergency as the world has been passing through, is *adaptability, resourcefulness*.

Now it must be admitted that in ordinary times John Bull's mentality does not impress one as possessing much adaptability to new situations. He refuses to recognize anything as new or to welcome anything that is new, if it can possibly be assimilated to old patterns. His dogged persistence in traditional ways, his stodgy refusal to reconsider his settled convictions, are often the despair of his friends.¹ But if John Bull is a bit stubborn and unimaginative in ordinary times, he is really rather magnificent in times of crisis. As one

¹ Some years ago I received a letter from a very intelligent French lady, the daughter and amanuensis of a distinguished French theologian. She confessed to a feeling of utter dismay at the imperviousness of the English mind to what she considered to be the plain logical consequences of modern Biblical scholarship and modern science. Her father, with French logicality, had followed out these consequences to the bitter end, and cleanly cut himself off from traditional Christianity, point after point, with heroic intellectual candour. English theology, by comparison with her father's, seemed like a tissue of outworn superstitions and hypocritical compromises, such as no honest open mind could tolerate. That this impatient judgement was not wholly due to foreign prejudice is proved by the fact that there are Englishmen who share it—such, for example, as that charmingly candid and picturesquely impatient parson, the Rev. Dick Sheppard. Yet . . . was she wholly right?

of my colleagues recently put it, apropos of the Ethiopian emergency, when your Englishman is faced with a truly threatening situation, he neither flies into a rage nor flies to pieces; he simply flies into an awful calm. On the eve of a crucial cabinet meeting, the King goes grouse-shooting, and the newspaper headlines are if possible more non-committal than usual. But behind that appearance of stolidity, an intense mental activity is going on. John Bull does not think for the joy of thinking, as his French and German neighbours seem to do. He does not think at all about ultimate questions, except in a roundabout, chatty, indirect sort of way, unless he is driven to it by grave practical considerations. Then it is that he flies into that awful calm, and slowly, ponderously, gropingly begins to close in upon the question at issue and wrestle with it as if his life depended upon it—as indeed it usually does, by the time he gets at it! In a real death-grapple emergency, he displays faculties of shrewd intelligence that one would not have dreamed he possessed; and a capacity for thinking with more than his head—for thinking with all his beefy sinews and all the strength of his well-knit frame—which is perhaps unsurpassed by any other nation.

The period since 1907 is a period in which the English mind has repeatedly been stirred to unwonted depths, and has responded to recurrent crises with recurrent efforts of thought. Altogether, it has been a period of most significant change, in theology as in politics. None of the three great traditions whose history we have traced has escaped modification, although

the general trend of the times has been away from idealistic liberalism or "Modernism" toward a genuine recovery of classical Christian theism. In this general movement of thought two minor cycles can be discerned, each revolving about a hot centre of mental distress and turmoil: (1) the pre-War cycle, revolving about the Modernist controversy and issuing in a reaffirmation of the transcendence of God; (2) the post-War cycle, revolving about the problem of evil and issuing in a fresh emphasis upon the suffering love of God. Let us consider the two periods in turn, relying as far as possible upon first-hand autobiographical materials for our sources.

I. PRE-WAR MODERNISM AND THE BEGINNINGS OF REACTION

The year 1907 was the stormiest year of the century, theologically speaking. Both in Catholic and in Protestant circles, the Modernist controversy reached the height of its fury in that year.

In January, the controversy over the views of R. J. Campbell, minister at the City Temple, "suddenly blazed in the daily Press."² Attacked on every hand, and excluded from the National Free Church Council, he replied to his critics by publishing in quick succession *The New Theology* and *New Theology Sermons*—which only heaped fuel on the flames and led to a voluminous controversial literature.

Meanwhile that lovable, indiscreet, and perennially belligerent Irishman, George Tyrrell, was entering upon the final stage of hopeless embroilment in his

² R. J. Campbell, *A Spiritual Pilgrimage*, p. 163.

relations with Rome. Having already renounced his allegiance to the Jesuit order, in terms hardly calculated to salve anyone's feelings, he now was negotiating for permission to celebrate mass as a secular priest, but repeatedly upsetting the negotiations by outbursts of rebellion against the conditions imposed. When the Encyclical *Pascendi* appeared in September, 1907, condemning Tyrrell and his fellow Modernists as "enemies of the Church, lost to all sense of modesty" and their doctrine as "the synthesis of all heresies,"³ it was the last straw! Tyrrell replied to the Pope within the month, in open letters to the London *Times* and the *Giornale d'Italia*. (One may reply to a Pope, perhaps, but not in the public press!) The Pope's response came on October 22nd, through the Bishop of Southwick: formal notice that Tyrrell was "deprived of the sacraments, and his case reserved to the Holy See."⁴ A polite way of telling him that he was, in effect, excommunicated. By a coincidence, an article by Tyrrell entitled "*Beati Excommunicati*," "Blessèd Are the Excommunicated," appeared almost at the same time. He denied that the light of religion in the Catholic Church could be so confined within her walls that any man could be completely, inwardly excommunicated from its influence.⁵ In predicting his excommunication earlier in the year, he had told a friend that he would not leave the Church of Rome for any other body, "but will

³ See *The Programme of Modernism*, pp. 151, 214.

⁴ Petre, *Autobiography and Life of George Tyrrell*, Vol. II, p. 341. New York, Longmans Green and Company, 1912.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 345.

stand on the doorstep and knock and ring and make myself a nuisance in every possible way.”⁶ This he did, loudly and importunately, in the hearing of all the world, for the space of a year and eight months. Then, laid low and rendered inarticulate by a fatal stroke of apoplexy, he consented—against his previous determination—to receive the last sacraments, but was even then refused Christian burial by the implacable authorities of the Church he had so greatly loved and so furiously detested.⁷

The *New Theology* of Campbell and the Modernism of Tyrrell had one outstanding trait in common, in spite of many obvious differences: they both were based upon an extreme *immanentism*. Like many of their contemporaries, they felt a sense of gladness and release in the thought of God as the inward Life and Soul of all things. Carlyle had expressed this thought in *Sartor Resartus*, and Tennyson in *The Higher Pantheism*. Ultimately, it was derived from German idealism, which is the *Mutterboden* of all modern immanentism. Tyrrell’s immanentism was connected with his struggle to uphold the rights of the inward voice of Conscience against the demands of external Authority.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 409.

⁷ Tyrrell’s divided feelings about the Church are revealed in the following passage from a letter to a friend, written in 1904: “I have the horrors on me and feel tangled in the arms of some marine polypus, or giant octopus. The Church sits on my soul like a nightmare, and the oppression is maddening; much more since these revelations of bad faith and cruel mendacity. I do not wonder that to Savonarola, and the mediaeval mystics, Rome seemed anti-Christ. The misery is that she is both—Christ and anti-Christ; wheat and tares; a double-faced Janus looking Heavenwards and Hellwards.” (*Ibid.*, p. 407. Quoted by permission of Longmans, Green and Company.)

My imagination is quite cured of the outside God; [he wrote to a friend shortly after his excommunication] for I feel that the inward spirit pervades and transcends the whole universe and reveals to me but an infinitesimal fraction of its Will and End and Truth and Nature.

I find most help in reading the Psalms and interpreting them into this immanent view of God, e.g. *In te Domine speravi*—all my hope is in this inward Spirit. *Tu est Deus fortitudo mea*—all fortitude and strength is the strength of Conscience; all weakness and feebleness is from an abandonment of Conscience. That is our Refuge, our Rock, our consolation in trouble . . . undoubtedly the hidden truth which the writer of the Psalms tried to express in terms of the “outside” God of the childish imagination.⁸

Campbell makes plain in the opening chapter of his *New Theology* that the dominant motive of his dissent from prevailing orthodoxy is opposition to that “practical dualism” which makes men “think of God as above and apart from His world instead of expressing Himself through His world.”⁹ In pursuit of this fundamental concern of establishing the inward unity of God, man and world, he goes to great lengths, under the guidance of the absolute idealism which then was his philosophy.

“When I say God, I mean the mysterious Power which is finding expression in the universe, and which is present in every tiniest atom of the wondrous whole. I find that this Power is the one reality I cannot get away from, for whatever else it may be, it is myself.”¹⁰

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 415.

⁹ *The New Theology*, p. 4.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

Of course I am finite, and God is infinite, but without taking my finite limitations upon Himself, God could not attain the "fullest self-realization."¹¹ A distinction must be made between my lower and higher self; but the distinction is a purely human distinction. Our lower or surface selves may seem to be separate from other selves, and from God, like islands in the sea; yet all selves are connected beneath the surface through the environing Life of God. "Ultimately your being and mine are one and we shall come to know it." "My God is my deeper Self and yours too; He is the Self of the Universe and knows all about it . . . the whole cosmic process is one long incarnation and uprising of the being of God from itself to itself."¹² If natural things are all manifestations of the divine thought and will, much more is God manifest—in rising degrees—in the human body, soul and spirit! What Jesus first realized, is true potentially of every one of us: "that the true man or higher self is divine and eternal, integral to the being of God, and that this divine manhood is gradually but surely manifesting on the physical plane."¹³

All absolute idealism, all extreme immanentism, when logically carried out, leads to the conclusion that evil is non-existent—as, for example, in Christian Science. Since God is in everything, and God is good, evil has no standing-room. Campbell does not shrink from this conclusion. "Evil," he explains, "is not a principle at war with good. Good is being and evil is not-being."

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 33, 35. The Hegelian ring of this is unmistakable.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

"The devil is a vacuum." Our finite consciousness perceives evil very much as our sense of sight perceives shadows cast by the rising sun. When the sun is fully risen, and shines down from overhead, the shadows disappear. They never had any real existence; they simply marked the place where the light had not yet fully come. "So it is with every kind of evil, no matter what. Your perception of evil is the concomitant of your expanding finite consciousness of good. . . . It is not a thing in itself, it is only the perceived privation of what you know to be good, and which you know to be good because of the very presence of limitation, hindrance, and imperfection."¹⁴

If this is true of all evil, it must be true of sin. Sin is a mistake. It is seeking life where it is not to be found, in self-gratification at the cost of the common life, instead of in self-giving to the whole, where alone it is to be found. The principle of self-seeking and the principle of self-giving run through the whole cosmic process; they are in apparent opposition, though "probably resolvable in that higher unity which is too mysterious for us to penetrate."¹⁵ At the human level it is plain that the former tends to death and non-existence, in spite of first appearances, while the latter leads to life, though it may pass through martyrdom on the way. The life of Jesus is the great expression of the way that leads to life. Through his absolute self-giving, his perfect identification with humanity as a whole, he tended to make Atonement for us all—to lift us into

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 43-45.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

that oneness with the eternal perfect whole, which is his already, and may be ours. But no man, though he takes the opposite path that leads to death, is wholly evil.

Sin itself [says Campbell, in a passage from one of his sermons more often quoted and criticised than anything else he ever uttered] is a quest for God—a blundering quest, but a quest for all that. The man who got dead drunk last night did so because of the impulse within him to break through the barriers of his limitations, to express himself, and to realize more abundant life. That drunken debauch was a quest for life, a quest for God. Men in their sinful follies today, and their blank atheism, and their blasphemies, their trampling upon things that are beautiful and good, are engaged in this dim, blundering quest for God, whom to know is life eternal. The *roué* you saw in Picadilly last night, who went out to corrupt innocence and to wallow in filthiness of the flesh, was engaged in his blundering quest for God.¹⁶

It is plain that to Campbell's fundamentally optimistic outlook all paths ultimately lead out into the light. There is no finally disastrous Fall in human history—only the divine Fall out of infinity into this world of created finite things, which inevitably leads back at length to infinity and perfection again. "The law of evolution governs human affairs just as it does every other part of the cosmic process." If our moral progress is not so rapid or so steady as our progress in the mastery of nature, it is none the less real and sure.

While it is only too sadly true that modern civilization con-

¹⁶ From *The New Theology*, by R. J. Campbell, pp. 150, 151. Permission of The Macmillan Company, Publishers.

tains plenty of callous selfishness, gross injustice, and abominable cruelty, it can hardly be denied that these relics of our brute ancestry are universally deplored, and that society recognizes them to be inimical to its well-being and seeks to get rid of them. . . . The average man today is certainly not nobler than the apostle Paul, nor does he see more deeply into the true meaning of life than did John the divine, but the general level is higher. Slowly, very slowly, with every now and then a depressing set-back, the race is climbing the steep ascent toward the ideal of universal brotherhood.¹⁷

I have selected those aspects of Campbell's thought which illustrate most clearly how the idea of divine immanence pervades and controls his theology. To stress them exclusively is of course to throw his teaching out of proportion, and do violence to it. *The New Theology*—especially when taken with its companion volume of sermons—is a noble and stirring book, full of rich human wisdom, drawn from a wide pastoral experience. Its clarity and candour make it stand out like a beacon light in the somewhat murky atmosphere of English thought—a beacon both of warning and of hope. It remains a classic of pre-War liberalism, not only for its primary emphasis upon divine immanence but for its secondary emphasis upon two other characteristic concerns of the period: the social application of the Gospel, and the reconciliation of theology with science—including not only Darwinian natural science, but scientific Biblical criticism as well. All three of these characteristic tendencies—immanence, Christian socialism, and scientific criticism—appeared simultane-

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 62, 63, 66.

ously as elements in the Catholic Modernist movement, and as such were expressly and severally condemned in the Encyclical *Pascendi*.

It hardly needs to be said that the present tendency of English theology is toward something very different from the Modernism and "New Theology" of 1907. Since the World War, that type of liberalism is heavily discounted. Indeed, it might be said that the present trend is diametrically opposed to it, and the present position to be determined by measuring the distance that has been traversed in fleeing from it. Transcendence instead of immanence, a more serious view of evil, social pessimism instead of social optimism, and a lower estimate of the importance of science for theology—these are the characteristic trends of the post-War period. The War itself is largely responsible for the change, as we shall point out presently; but it is only fair to say that a reaction against Modernism and "New Theology" had already set in before the War—and R. J. Campbell was himself one of the leaders in the reaction! The story of his gradual transition from theological iconoclasm to theological conservatism, and final entrance into the Church of England, is not only fascinating in itself, but thoroughly typical of the trend of the times. Let us follow the steps of his *Spiritual Pilgrimage*, noting the most important of the influences which led him to change his course. In so doing, we shall get many hints as to why English theology as a whole has moved along a roughly parallel path.

The first influence that shook Campbell's confidence in himself was that of Bishop Gore. Among the many

books written in reply to *The New Theology*, Gore's book on *The New Theology and the Old Religion* was at once the most appreciative and the most discriminating. While firmly opposing the pantheistic drift of Campbell's extreme immanentism, he remarked that it was perhaps a natural and necessary reaction against certain nineteenth-century forms of Protestant orthodoxy, whose violent supernaturalism, literal Biblicalism and mechanical theory of the Atonement had never been followed by Catholic theology, either Roman or Anglican. Campbell was touched by Gore's kindness and understanding—which were in strong contrast with the harshness of the treatment he had to endure at the hands of his Nonconformist brethren—and began to consider seriously whether there might not be much justice in the further objections raised by this gentle and discerning critic. On one matter in particular, he was struck with compunction: his theory of sin. He became aware that when actually confronted with sin in his pastoral ministry, he was obliged to regard it more tragically and treat it more drastically than his theory allowed. "In practice, my view of sin was serious enough; in theory it was not. This poor sad world of ours needs a more strenuous gospel than the assurance that our sins are merely wrong turnings on the upward road, and that all must inevitably come right at last."¹⁸

The second influence tending to modify Campbell's position was that of the Christological controversy which reached its height in 1909 and 1910, when Tyr-

¹⁸ Campbell, *A Spiritual Pilgrimage*, p. 173. New York. The Appleton-Century Company, 1916.

rell's posthumous book, *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*, Schweitzer's *Quest of the Historical Jesus* (in its English translation), and Professor Drew's exposition of the "Christ-Myth" theory all appeared within a few months of each other. Some of Campbell's intimate associates in the New Theology movement accepted the Christ-Myth hypothesis, and announced that they found the Mystic Christ enough to live by, whether Jesus of Nazareth had ever lived or not. Campbell reacted strongly against this position. He had always preached the Mystic Christ of St. Paul, interpreting the idea in terms of F. D. Maurice's conception of Christ as the Head of Humanity, the inmost Soul of the whole human race; but to leave this great idea hanging in the clouds, without any clear historical foundation, seemed to him intolerable. Plunging anew into New Testament criticism, he found that he could retain his conviction of the genuine historicity of Jesus; but he was vastly impressed and disturbed by Tyrrell's contention that the real Jesus, when viewed in the light of the eschatological interpretation of his life and teachings, was much more like the Christ of Catholic orthodoxy than he was like the Great Humanitarian of liberal Protestantism.

It was in fact impossible to interpret the Christ of the Newer Criticism in terms of the immanentist theology which Tyrrell and Campbell had once had in common. Tyrrell himself had been disappointed in Campbell's *New Theology*; and had begun to believe, shortly before his death, in orthodox Christianity's historic emphasis upon divine incursion from the Beyond.

If we cannot save huge chunks of transcendentalism [he wrote during the composition of his last book] Christianity must go. Civilization can do (and has done) all that the purely immanent Christ of Matthew Arnold is credited with. The other-world emphasis . . . was what gave Christianity its original impulse and sent Christians to the lions. . . . If I cannot maintain that I will not stop at Campbell's half-way house.¹⁹

Campbell sensed this change of attitude when *Christianity at the Cross-Roads* came out. He thought Tyrrell's Christ came "perilously near to being a crazy enthusiast";²⁰ but the book haunted him, nevertheless. In 1911 he preached a sermon on "The Intrusion of the Transcendental," in which he adopted at least one major feature of Tyrrell's view:

The late Father Tyrrell in the last book he ever wrote declares that the secret which Jesus carried about with Him . . . was His consciousness of belonging to the transcendental world, of being the Lord from Heaven of pious expectation. . . . All the highest spiritual experience has consistently affirmed through all ages, that there is a transcendental world and that a mighty being once left it in order to take upon Himself our burden and help us to win our fight.²¹

A number of minor influences combined to reinforce the new trend of Campbell's thinking. Bergson's philosophy weakened his belief in the sufficiency of intellect to discover ultimate truth. Eucken's transcendental idealism convinced him of the inadequacy of the purely immanent idealism which had hitherto been his phil-

¹⁹ Petre, *op. cit.*, p. 398.

²⁰ *A Spiritual Pilgrimage*, p. 198.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 233-234.

osophical creed. Both in Eucken and in certain other writers, he encountered about 1911 a vein of pessimism about the trend of modern civilization, which finally destroyed his evolutionary optimism. Not by evolution, but only by a revolutionary incursion of divine grace, could corrupt society be saved—and then so as by fire. But among the many forces that beat upon his mind in those years of gathering storm-clouds, Campbell singles out one as “the most important influence that entered my religious life at this period”: Baron von Hügel’s *Mystical Element of Religion*, which he considers to be “one of the greatest books of the twentieth century thus far, perhaps the very greatest.”²² There was in von Hügel a strong vein of transcendentalism, which must have given Campbell further encouragement in his revolt against immanentism. But just at this juncture, it was another side of von Hügel’s thought which made the greatest impression upon Campbell: his defense of institutionalism and sacramentalism as necessary elements in religion, co-ordinate with the intuitional and intellectual elements. “His exposition revealed to me,” says Campbell, “that we could no more have Christianity without the Church than we could have life without embodiment in such a world as ours.”²³ The world of material things, which he had hitherto regarded as unreal and phenomenal, because of his idealistic philosophy, he now came to view more realistically, as the sacramental vehicle of higher spiritual truth. For a time he was content to

²² *Ibid.*, p. 241.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 242.

preach the "sacramentalism of all life," but more and more felt the need of "a spiritual environment wherein that idea was authoritatively recognized and expressed"; and he eventually found that environment in the Church of England, where he was reordained in 1916. The previous year, he had formally repudiated his earlier form of liberalism by withdrawing *The New Theology*, calling in all copies as far as possible, and purchasing the publishing rights to prevent reissue. To-day he is commonly classed as a liberal Catholic, along with the authors of the *Essays Catholic and Critical*; but his liberalism is leagues removed from the position which he held in 1907.

Campbell's *Spiritual Pilgrimage* is as we have said typical of the general movement of religious thought in England during the pre-War decade. Especially typical is the determinative influence which *von Hügel* exercised over his later development. The Baron von Hügel was undoubtedly the most important religious thinker of the last generation in England. His influence upon men of all parties, Catholic, Protestant and liberal, was truly extraordinary. As a defender of the right of honest thought and scholarly investigation in the Roman Catholic Church, and as a loyal friend of the ill-fated Tyrrell, he won the sympathy and confidence of liberal Protestants; but he was actually the most Catholic of Catholics, and a more deadly foe of Modernism than the Pope, because his criticism of it was more sympathetic and fair-minded. Quakers, Anglo-Catholics and free-lances like Dean Inge deferred to him as the greatest living authority on Mys-

ticism; and he won them all to a new respect for the Roman Catholic position, though he was on principle opposed to proselyting. Next to the World War, von Hügel's influence is the greatest single cause to which the decline of pre-War immanentism can be ascribed. As evidence that this decline was already well on its way before the outbreak of hostilities, we may turn our attention briefly to the figure of a brilliant young philosopher, Mr. T. E. Hulme, whose *Speculations*, published by his friends after he was killed in action, constitute proof that a great ground-swell of protest against the intellectual presuppositions of modern liberalism was already rising, even before the War exposed their fundamental rottenness.

The prevailing concept of nineteenth-century thought, remarks Hulme in his opening essay, was the principle of *continuity*.²⁴ This principle has now become so much a part of us that we cannot "look at a gap or chasm without shuddering." Yet our world is actually full of discontinuities and raw facts which cannot be crammed into any polite idealistic system; and it is now imperative that we should learn again to see them. Two great gaps, in particular, must be admitted to be quite absolute and unbridgeable, if our thinking is not to remain in the hopeless confusion which has beset it throughout the age of Romanticism and Modernism: (1) the gap between the inorganic world and the organic world; (2) the gap between the organic world and the world of ethical and religious values.

²⁴ T. E. Hulme, *Speculations*, New York, Harcourt Brace and Co., 1924. Essay on "Humanism and the Religious Attitude."

As against the popular materialism which assimilated everything to the inorganic, the vitalistic philosophy and theology of Romanticism and Modernism represents a needed protest. But if vitalism preserves the gap between the inorganic and the organic, it proceeds to confuse everything by neglecting the gap between the organic and the divine.

Biology is not theology, nor can God be defined in terms of "life" or "progress." Modernism entirely misunderstands the nature of religion. . . . It is necessary to realize that there is an absolute, and not a relative, difference between humanism (which we can take to be the highest expression of the vital) and the religious spirit. The *divine* is not *life* at its intensest. It contains in a way an almost *anti-vital* element; quite different of course from the non-vital character of the outside physical region. The questions of Original Sin, of chastity, of the motives behind Buddhism, etc.; all part of the very essence of the religious spirit, are quite incomprehensible for humanism.²⁵

The modern philosophy of continuity is to Hulme the final logical outcome of Renaissance humanism, which threw off the mediæval consciousness of a divine over-world, and left man rejoicing in his own vitality and intelligence as though he were the veritable Lord of creation. Having imposed his will upon his environment and thrown the "gossamer web" of his intelligence over the vast "cinder-heap" of the world, he now refuses to recognize anything, whether divine or chaotic, which will not fit into his smooth categories. Hulme hates "smoothness," and loves "cinders."²⁶ He

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 9.

²⁶ See the remarkable closing fragment, pp. 217-245, entitled "Cinders: a sketch of a new Weltanschauung."

believes that a great revulsion against the whole era of humanism is in preparation, and he sees a symptom of the coming change in modern art, which is losing its vital, humanistic contours and becoming harshly geometrical—an unconscious intimation of the fact that man is in the grip of divine and demonic forces that in the long run will shatter his pretty categories, and make him conscious once more of his creaturehood.

Man [says Hulme] is the chaos highly organized, but liable to revert to chaos at any moment. . . .

The apparent scientific unity of the world may be due to the fact that man is a kind of sorting machine. . . .

The absolute is invented to reconcile conflicting purposes. But these purposes are necessarily conflicting, even in the nature of Truth itself. It is so absurd to construct an absolute which shall at each moment just manage by artificial gymnastics to reconcile these purposes. . . . I shall call my philosophy the "Valet to the Absolute." The Absolute not a hero to his own valet. . . .

All heroes, great men, go to the outside, away from the Room, and wrestle with cinders . . . Never speak of "my unconquerable soul," or any vulgarism of that sort. But thank God for the long note of the bugle, which moves all the world bodily out of the cinders and the mud.²⁷

Hulme did not live to complete the philosophy which he foreshadowed in these prophetic words. Modern man reverted to chaos. The smooth dream-world of absolute idealism was shattered to bits. The long bugle-note sounded. Hulme went out with other young men to wrestle with cinders; and he never came back.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 227-238.

2. THE THEOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE WORLD WAR

The crisis of Western civilization which began in 1914 has proved to be a continuing crisis. No greater disillusionment has ever been suffered by mankind than that which began to strike its chill into men's hearts in the years that followed the signing of the "peace" of Versailles.

It had seemed believable, during the apocalyptic years 1914-1919, that this was Armageddon, the final war to end war, and the Millennium was to follow. The warriors who had overthrown the hosts of darkness and bound Satan in the person of the Kaiser, were to return to "a world fit for heroes to live in." Society was to undergo "reconstruction" on a new and ideal plan, and a "New Age" of peace and democracy was to begin. The onward march of civilization, interrupted by this last desperate assault of the forces of chaos, was to be resumed in triumph, and never cease until it had overspread the earth.

These idealistic hopes were so completely confounded that all forms of idealism were discredited, and a mood of bitter cynicism grew up instead. In England as elsewhere, the decade after the War was one of individualistic revolt against all time-honoured beliefs, customs, and institutions. Not only was Christian faith in God repudiated by large masses of the younger generation, but Christian morals shared in the same disrepute—a length to which even the most sceptical of the Victorians never went. As Mr. Joseph Wood Krutch has

pointed out, Thomas Huxley defended love as the supreme value, though doubting the reality of God; but his grandson Aldous Huxley, during the post-War revolt, led the chorus of derision which turned love into an obscene joke, and human life in general into a mad, meaningless skeleton-dance.²⁸ If the moral nihilism of those dizzy years has somewhat abated of late, it has not been followed by a great resurgent wave of Christian faith. Mr. Middleton Murry is typical of many of the younger generation who, having wearied of brittle sophistication and individualistic self-expression, have turned to communism—or its political opposite—as more soul-satisfying than traditional Christianity.

Throughout this turbulent period, one problem in various guises has persistently troubled the minds of Christian theologians: *the problem of evil*. During the War itself, it appeared in a very acute form, as expressed in the question, "Why does God permit all this bloodshed and horror?" In all accounts of the religious experience of men at the front, there appears a tragic paradox. On the one hand, men found themselves spontaneously reaching out, in the face of death, for more than human support; and the presence of God became so vividly real to them that they could not doubt it. On the other hand, men found themselves losing the faith in God by which their lives had hitherto been supported, or wavering in their new-found faith, because of the shocking incongruity between their experiences on the battlefield and all that seemed to be

²⁸ See the chapter on "Love: or the Life and Death of a Value," in Mr. Krutch's book, *The Modern Temper*.

implied in the belief that this world is governed by a loving, wise, and omnipotent God. Some citations from the inquiry on *The Army and Religion*, conducted jointly by the Bishop of Winchester and Professor D. S. Cairns, may serve to give concreteness to this paradox:

Two convictions possessed me [wrote one correspondent]. The first was the Reality of God, and the other was the absolute impossibility that so great a thing as life, as we were experiencing it, could come to an end with death.

They are conscious [wrote another, a chaplain, concerning his men] of being in the hands of a Power which controls the world; they are conscious of their impotence and littleness. But they are not prepared to believe that this Power is or can be called "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." They believe that they see no evidence of a loving control of this appalling world, though they may believe in some control by One who has created and who governs the world. I think a number of them would agree with Thomas Carlyle's saying as to how "God seems to do nothing"—nothing, *i.e.*, which one might expect from One whom one believes to be the Father of men.²⁹

The pre-War discussion concerning the immanence and transcendence of God was strangely irrelevant to this problem. The immanent God of the New Theology and the transcendent God of Baron von Hügel seemed equally inadequate on the battlefield—for opposite reasons. The one was too deeply implicated in the world's evil, the other too far above it. Campbell's

²⁹ From *The Army and Religion*, pp. 22, 34. Published in the U. S. A. by the Association Press.

idealistic monism had compelled him to reduce evil to a mere shadow in order to find God everywhere. Evil, on the battlefield, was more than a shadow. Von Hügel's conception of the Absolute Perfection of God had led him to reject the notion that even a drop of evil, a drop of suffering could be contained in the ocean of Joy and Delectation which constitutes the divine Being.⁸⁰ Such a God might be infinitely sympathetic and condescending, as von Hügel said, but if the ghastly horrors of the western front caused him no twinge of suffering, no slight diminuendo in his perfect Joy and Delectation . . . well, it was hard to love him! How was this awful paradox to be solved?

The boldest and most drastic solution was offered by that brave and unconventional chaplain G. A. Studdert-Kennedy—"Woodbine Willy" to the soldiers—whose rough-hewn poetry and slangy sermons will remain for all future generations among the great monuments of the Great Tribulation. With a vehemence born of tragic concern for the bewilderment and distress of his men, Studdert-Kennedy cries out against the conception of God as an almighty monarch "upon a throne, calm, serene, and passionless, ruling the world with a wave of the hand."⁸¹ In a burst of holy anger, he cries:

And I hate the God of Power on His hellish heavenly throne,
Looking down on rape and murder, hearing little children
moan.

⁸⁰ See von Hügel's *Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. II, pp. 204-213, on "Suffering and God."

⁸¹ *The Hardest Part*, p. 149.

Are there no tears in the heart of the Eternal?
 Is there no pain to pierce the soul of God?
 Then must He be a fiend of Hell infernal,
 Beating the earth to pieces with His rod.³²

One thought alone preserves his faith in God, and turns rebellion into adoration: the thought that in the suffering love of Christ upon his Cross there is revealed not merely the *sympathy* but the *suffering* of God; that God's is indeed "The Hardest Part."

The sorrows o' God must be 'ard to bear
 If 'E really 'as Love in 'Is 'eart,
 And the 'ardest part i' the world to play
 Must surely be God's part. . . .

Not just that 'E suffered once for all
 To save us from our sins,
 And then went up to 'Is throne on 'igh
 To wait till 'Is 'eaven begins.

But what if 'E came to the earth to show,
 By the paths o' pain that 'E trod
 The blistering flame of eternal shame
 That burns in the heart o' God?

O God, if that's 'ow it really is,
 Why, bless ye, I understands,
 And I feels for you wi' your thorn-crowned 'ead
 And your ever-piercèd 'ands.³³

In the agony of war-time, Studdert-Kennedy some-

³² *The Sorrows of God, and Other Poems*, pp. 52, 13. New York, George H. Doran Company, 1924. Quoted by permission.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 122, 124. Quoted by permission.

times expressed this thought in ways that led to his being classified with Mr. H. G. Wells as an upholder of the idea of a "finite God." He spoke of God as a "Comrade,"⁸⁴ who "meets His band of volunteers and pours His Spirit into them, and sends them out to fight, to suffer, and to conquer in the end"⁸⁵—very much as Mr. Wells pictures his "Invisible King" imparting courage and strength to his followers in the desperate struggle with evil. The psychology of combat imparted a sharp, clear-cut dualism to Studdert-Kennedy's views, as to Mr. Wells', so long as the war was on. But when that crisis was past, and the weary years of post-War frustration began to drag on, it became evident how profound was the abyss that separated the man of Christian faith from the agnostic dilettante. Kennedy's faith in the ultimate omnipotence of suffering love never wavered; and the Christ-God whom he worshipped and served was to him no puny rebel against an inexorable fate—the "Veiled Being"—which overshadowed Him as it overshadows us. He was the master of the stars as surely as He was master of our souls.

The maturest expression of Studdert-Kennedy's thought on this great theme is perhaps to be found in his sermon on the word "Almighty" in the Apostles' Creed—a word which he characteristically turns into a question by adding an interrogation point in his title. He admits that when he comes to that word in the Creed he is inclined to "boggle and hesitate"; and if it implies that God is so fully "Master in His own uni-

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

⁸⁵ *The Hardest Part*, p. 117.

verse" that every detail in the world-process is the result of His deliberate choice, then he is obliged to protest:

Snakes, sharks, and blood-sucking vermin—what sort of a God is this? He chose this way because He gloried in it? That beats the band. . . . *Nothing can justify this method of Creation but absolute Necessity.* This way is only tolerable if it is *the only way.* There must be a great necessity binding upon the Creator. . . . He must hate the process if He is good just as much as I do, and more, and I do hate it with all my heart.⁸⁶

Yet with all his hatred of the cruelties of the world-process, Studdert-Kennedy finds himself unable to join Mr. Bertrand Russell and Mr. H. G. Wells in their attitude of Promethean defiance, and their exclusive allegiance to the "still small voice within"; for he recognizes that he and his protest and the still small voice are all in the same sense products of the process. Defiance of the world is absurd, though submission to it is worse. "Every decent man must be a rebel"; but Studdert-Kennedy proposes to become a "rebel in the name of God"—a God whose working is discernible in the world-process, but who is Himself "better than the process . . . beyond as well as in it."⁸⁷

Is this to make God a baffled insurgent in His own universe? Only if we share the common illusions about the power of force and the weakness of pure love. If God were simply a God of law and order, then He

⁸⁶ *I Believe: Sermons on the Apostles' Creed* ("Food for the Fed-Up"), p. 54. New York, George H. Doran Co., c. 1921. Quoted by permission.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 56. It will be noticed that Studdert-Kennedy here appeals to the idea of divine transcendence as a help in the solution of the problem of evil.

might accomplish His purpose by a show of force, and any appearance of disorder would be a proof of His weakness. But God's purposes are creative; and for creative purposes force is weak and persuasion is strong. The rapid dissolution of the artificial national unity created by the War proves how powerless is force to create the kind of vital, willing unity of mankind at which we believe God is aiming. For that, only persuasion will suffice; and the only "almighty" persuasive power in the end is love.

"Why all this talk?" says the soldier, the simple, strong, and silent soldier. "Why all this talk? Why don't you get the thing done?" Because, O silent, strong, and extremely simple (not to say fat-headed) soldier, my purpose is not your purpose, and my power is not your power. . . . Your power is compulsion, and mine is persuasion. Your very existence is the result of my weakness. You only come in where I fail. . . . That does not mean that we should abolish all armaments and force to-morrow. It merely means that we should start out on the right basis and recognize that our armaments are symbols, not of our power, but of our weakness, that the great powers are the great weaknesses of our world. . . . Our military power is an exact index of our spiritual and moral impotence. . . . It is impossible to prove that Love is almighty now; it does not reveal itself as supreme, but as struggling, striving, and conquering, calling us to fling ourselves in faith upon it, and prove it almighty in our lives. That is the sense of the Creed.³⁸

It only remains to add that the love in whose omnipotence Studdert-Kennedy professes his faith is not the sentimental thing which Nietzsche denounced. In his

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 63-67. Quoted by permission.

last important book, *The Warrior, the Woman, and the Christ*, he made it plain that the divine love revealed in Christ was not definable as refined mother-love, or anything so simple as that. It might rather be said to involve a high tension between the warrior-principle and the woman-principle, "locked in creative conflict."

We have dwelt upon Kennedy's idea of the suffering of God because it is one of the main themes that run through the post-War period in English theology, and give a distinctive colour to the contemporary period. Just as a renewed emphasis upon divine transcendence was characteristic of the years just before the War, so a deepened insistence upon God's intimate participation in our human struggles and woes has been characteristic of the years since the War. Mr. J. K. Mozley, in his book on *The Impassibility of God*, has shown how wide-spread has been the modern revolt against the ancient Greek idea that it is a derogation from God's majesty and perfection to attribute suffering to Him. Studdert-Kennedy is only the most eloquent and outspoken of this school of thought. He has had many companions-at-arms. His immediate predecessor was undoubtedly Canon Streeter, whose article on "The Suffering of God" in the *Hibbert Journal* for April, 1914, came just in time to prepare his mind for the war emergency. Among his successors have been men of as diverse background as Archbishop D'Arcy of Dublin, Archbishop William Temple, and Dr. Maldwyn Hughes of Wesley House, Cambridge. Highly prized by most of these writers is a book called *The World's Redemption*, by C. E. Rolt, which appeared in

1913 and was commended by Streeter in his *Hibbert Journal* article.³⁹

It would be too much to claim that this remarkable movement of thought had had a decisive influence in checking the post-War decline of moral and religious faith. The main factor in checking that mad stampede has been what might be called *disillusionment with disillusion*, together with the sobering effect of new social perils and responsibilities. But it is interesting to note how close is the analogy between Studdert-Kennedy's position and the position to which Mr. Aldous Huxley himself is gradually coming round, after a wide circuit through the waste-lands of human pathology. Faced by the prospect of a rigidly planned society, whether of the communist or the fascist variety, Mr. Huxley has lately been galvanized out of his moral despair into a mood of active indignation—very much like our own quondam futilitarian, Mr. Joseph Wood Krutch—and he has given vent to his wrath in that blistering satire called *Brave New World*. The climactic scene in the book is where the rebellious Savage—presumably representing Mr. Huxley's own sentiments—is having the virtues of the planned society extolled to him by Mustapha Mond, the Controller of the World State. The Savage protests that the happiness of the World State has been bought at a heavy price: the suppression of art, science, and religion. The Controller cheerfully admits the suppression, and justifies it, though he grants that God probably exists, and manifests Himself even in this perfect society “as an absence.”

³⁹ See Mozley, *The Impossibility of God*, pp. 154-166.

"God [he explains] isn't compatible with machinery and scientific medicine and universal happiness. You must make your choice. Our civilization has chosen machinery and medicine and happiness. That's why I have to keep these books [the Bible] locked up in a safe. They're smut. People would be shocked if . . ."

"But all the same", insisted the Savage, "it is natural to believe in God when you're alone—quite alone, in the night, thinking about death . . ."

"But people never are alone now", said Mustapha Mond. "We make them hate solitude; and we arrange their lives so that it's almost impossible for them ever to have it."

"But God's the reason for everything noble and fine and heroic. If you have God . . ."

"My dear friend", said Mustapha Mond, "civilization has absolutely no need of nobility or heroism. These things are symptoms of political inefficiency. In a properly organized society like ours, nobody has any opportunities for being noble or heroic . . ."

"But I like the inconveniences."

"We don't", said the Controller. "We prefer to do things comfortably."

"But I don't want comfort. I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sin."

"In fact", said Mustapha Mond, "you're claiming the right to be unhappy."

"All right, then", said the Savage defiantly, "I'm claiming the right to be unhappy."

"Not to mention the right to grow old and ugly and impotent; the right to have syphilis and cancer; the right to have too little to eat; the right to be lousy; the right to live in constant apprehension of what may happen tomorrow; the right

to catch typhoid; the right to be tortured by unspeakable pains of every kind."

There was a long silence. "I claim them all", said the Savage at last.⁴⁰

I suppose Mr. Huxley would not be complimented if he were told that he had made a first-rate contribution to theodicy. Doubtless it is his main purpose to warn people against communism and fascism. But in so doing, he has made it compellingly clear that a world controlled by the slow persuasion of a patient and long-suffering God is infinitely preferable, in spite of its inevitable evils, to a world from which the possibility of evil has been removed by artificial compulsion—whether by human scheming or omnipotent intervention is beside the point. Thomas Huxley once professed to be willing to be turned into an automaton if thereby he could be assured of infallibly doing right. Our fliprant contemporary, for all the coarseness of his humour and the smuttiness of his mind, has proved wiser and more Christian in his generation than his eminent Victorian grandsire. Studdert-Kennedy, at least, would welcome him as a comrade of God in the great fight.

3. THE GENERAL TREND, 1907-1935

We have charted the course of two recent cycles of theological discussion: the pre-War cycle initiated by the Modernist controversy of 1907, which led to a general reaction against monistic idealism and immanentism, in favour of a more transcendent view of God;

⁴⁰ From *Brave New World*, by Aldous Huxley, pp. 276-283. Copyright, 1932, by Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc.

and the post-War cycle initiated by the political crisis of 1914, which led to a deepened sense of the reality of evil, the suffering of God, and the limitations imposed upon divine omnipotence by human waywardness and folly. What, now, has been the general trend of the whole period? It might seem as though the two movements of thought which have been described were contrary one to the other, since the first exalted God above the world and the second implicated Him profoundly in its woes. Yet in point of fact the two have been supplementary and have contributed to a common trend, which might be defined as a trend away from idealism and optimism toward a sterner, less man-centred, more sharply dualistic conception of the relations between God and His creatures. If Baron von Hügel's conception of the impassibility of God did not prevail, his emphasis upon divine transcendence did; and it might not be unfair to define the trend of the times as a trend away from Romanticism toward classical Catholicism.⁴¹

⁴¹ By "classical Catholicism" I do not mean Roman or Anglican Catholicism, but the Theology of Incarnation which prevailed in the Early Catholic Church, through all the disputes over the Trinity and the Person of Christ, and which has been the core of all truly vital forms of Christian orthodoxy ever since. For Romantic idealism, it is a mere platitude to say, "God is here" or "God was in Christ"; for the Soul of all things is of course here, and is in us all. For classical Catholicism, these are no truisms, but glad mysteries to be observed with tears of joy and bated breath; for He who has drawn near in Christ, to share our woes, is He whom "heaven and earth cannot contain," who is "over all, God blessed forever." In other words, the God of classical Catholicism unites paradoxically and inextricably the two attributes of *ultimacy* and *intimacy* (Webb) which are so often severed in our conceptions of Him. He is above His whole creation, but He has entered our humanity in Christ, and by His Spirit He is nearer to us than we are to ourselves.

A career which covers the whole of our period, and in which all its theological movements are interestingly reflected, is that of W. E. Orchard, former minister of the King's Weigh House, London, and now a convert to Roman Catholicism. In his autobiography, *From Faith to Faith* (1933), we can trace the influence upon his mind of both the cycles of thought which we have discussed. In 1907, he was a liberal, closely associated with R. J. Campbell and his movement. He relates that he used to absent himself from his church at Easter, because of doubts about the Resurrection. The publication of *The New Theology* caused him to react against its monistic idealism along lines suggested by Eucken's more transcendental philosophy. The War drove him even farther to the left than Studdert-Kennedy, to a position of absolute pacifism; but his growing social radicalism was combined with a growing theological conservatism. The remark of an Anglo-Catholic woman, "Here's a man who wants to reform the World, and he begins by rejecting the only doctrines that would give him the right and power to do it,"⁴² entered deeply into his consciousness. He led the King's Weigh House continually deeper into active interest in social issues, and into Catholic ritual practices. Finally, "Free Catholicism" failed to satisfy his thirst for institutional solidarity, and he went over to Rome—with just one scruple: he found it difficult to "detest" his former faith as required in the oath!⁴³

An outstanding figure in contemporary English

⁴² Orchard, *From Faith to Faith*, p. 98.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 186-188.

church life, Dr. Orchard is in many respects representative of the trend of the times. If English theology is not likely to follow him all the way to Rome, it is at least moving with him from Romantic idealism toward a more classically orthodox position. This impression will be confirmed when we come to chart the trend of all the traditional types of liberalism, in our next chapter.

CHAPTER III

LIBERALISM TODAY

LIBERALISMS perish; liberalism remains.¹ That is a distinction which forces itself upon anyone who studies contemporary English civilization, whether from the political or the religious point of view.

The old Gladstonian Liberal party is admittedly dead, though its last leader, Mr. Lloyd George, keeps up the appearance of life and hope with astonishing vigour for a man of his years. That does not mean that political liberalism is dead in England; it simply means that its policies have had to be drastically revised, and that the leadership of the liberal forces has now passed to the Labour party, as it passed from the Whigs to the Liberals in the middle of the last century. Similarly, it is evident that pre-War "Modernism" and "New Theology," with their strong infusion of Romantic or Hegelian idealism, are waning forces in contemporary English religion; but religious liberalism is far from extinct. It is taking new forms and adopting new principles; and, to a considerable extent, going back to earlier periods in the liberal tradition for fresh inspiration. All the forms of liberalism which we reviewed in a previous chapter are still alive, some of them revitalized, and new forms are springing up. Let us consider them in turn.

¹ In these words I make my apology to all those who have been troubled by a too literal understanding of my announcement (*Realistic Theology*, Chap. I) that American religious liberalism is "dead."

I. UNITARIANISM: L. P. JACKS

The one English denomination which is specifically ear-marked "liberal," the Unitarian Church, shows signs of continued intellectual vitality in our generation, being ably represented in the field of religious thought by Dr. L. P. Jacks, former Principal of Manchester College, Oxford, and editor of the *Hibbert Journal*.

Like his distinguished predecessor in the leadership of the denomination, James Martineau, Principal Jacks has been especially active in the frontier region between theology and general philosophy, contending against agnosticism and naturalism on behalf of the fundamental postulates of Christian theism. His method of attack and style of thought are, however, strikingly different from Martineau's. Martineau was a great system-builder. His published works, like his sonorous periodic sentences, were built upon a harmonious and unified scheme, to which every book, every chapter—one might almost say, every well-turned phrase—made its contribution in such a way as to reinforce the whole structure of thought. The writings of L. P. Jacks are very numerous, but they are occasional and unsystematic in character and journalistic in style. One seeks in vain among them for any comprehensive treatment of the main issues of religious thought; titles like *A Living Universe* promise more than they fulfil. What one does find is a consistent *attitude* running through all these writings, like a theme with variations, and

brought to bear upon all manner of problems with great sanity and resourcefulness.

When this attitude has once been grasped, the reason for the unsystematic character of our author's thought at once appears. It is partly, of course, a result of the journalistic activities in which he has been engaged for so many years; but it is also a matter of principle. Dr. Jacks is an anti-intellectualist, a pragmatist, a follower of William James and Henri Bergson; he does not *believe* in close, demonstrative logic as a proper method for theology. Religious faith, as he conceives it, is something more than the sort of cold conviction which the purely rational arguments of Locke and Paley were calculated to produce; it is "reason grown courageous,"² ready to risk error and defeat for the sake of noble and generous ends. It makes the right answer to the question which Carlyle said was the one ultimate question that every man must face: "Wilt thou be a hero or a coward?"

Logical machinery [says Jacks] cannot follow the movement of the live spirit, nor arrest it even for a moment's inspection. . . . There is a coward and a hero in the breast of every man. Each of the pair has a "logic" of his own adapted to his particular purpose and aim—which is safety for the coward and victory for the hero. The two are perpetually at variance, the reason of the one being the unreason of the other, the truth of one being the falsehood of the other. . . .

The coward within us asks for the proof; cries out that the venture is not *safe*, and summoning the will-to-disbelieve has

² *Religious Perplexities*, p. 19. This implies, of course, that faith is not *irrational*; it is really a more "reasonable" attitude toward life than pure "rationality" would be.

no difficulty in finding reasons for rejecting the invitation. The hero, on the contrary . . . would rather *create* the proof by his own valour than have it for nothing from the outset. He is not dismayed at finding himself in a universe which puts him under no *compulsion* to believe in God, Freedom, Duty, and Immortality. . . . He finds his own nature as hero exquisitely adapted to the nature of the universe as dangerous—on that side the ringing challenge, on this the joyous response; man and the universe engaged together as loyal confederates in the task of creating a better-than-what-is. . . . This world is ill adapted to the fearful and the unbelieving; but most exquisitely adapted to the loyal, the loving and the brave. To poltroonery of one kind or another the Spirit makes no concessions; it wears the face of a hard master to all pusillanimous demands. To its own children it is not only gracious but faithful.³

The historical genealogy of this challenging attitude towards the problems of religion is clear enough. It springs directly from William James's essay on "The Will to Believe," which in turn rests back upon the ethical theism of Kant and Fichte, and their neo-Kantian successors—men like Ritschl, Renouvier, Carlyle, and Matthew Arnold. On the negative side—the insufficiency of mere intellect—Dr. Jacks owes much to Henri Bergson and his followers among the Catholic Modernists, as is very evident from the references to them in his recent book, *The Revolt Against Mechanism* (Hibbert Lectures, 1933). On the whole, this general attitude has been much more widespread in America than in England; which may account in part for the eagerness with which the editor of the *Hibbert*

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 17, 32, 33, 91.

Journal has been welcomed on this side of the Atlantic, while in his native land the Dean and Chapter of Liverpool Cathedral were recently subjected to legal suit and official reprimand for permitting him to speak under their auspices. Unless the Ritschlian theology be classified under this head, the pragmatic movement has had little influence upon English theology, in comparison with the idealistic movement, and we have hitherto had no occasion to mention it among the well-established types of liberalism. In general philosophy, however, it found an able exponent in Mr. F. C. S. Schiller—who, significantly enough, eventually found a better sphere of influence in America than at home—and now at length in Dr. Jacks it has found its best theological representative.

"On one side of the line," said the Bishop of Durham, introducing his resolution to exclude Dr. Jacks and his co-religionists henceforth from Anglican pulpits, "stands the Holy Catholic Church; on the other stand the Unitarians."⁴ The Unitarians are thus formally singled out as the one professedly Christian body which is reckoned beyond the pale of Christianity by the Church of England today—unless the Society of Friends and other bodies which do not officially subscribe to the Nicene Creed are included in the same condemnation. In the presence of such a formidable decree of excommunication—more severe, of course, than the Bishops would have cared to pronounce if they had not been driven to it by Lord Hugh Cecil's

⁴ See *Two Letters, Dr. L. P. Jacks in reply to Dr. C. E. Raven and Dr. F. W. Dwelly*, p. 18. Oxford University Press, 1934.

embarrassing lawsuit—one feels the impulse to inquire,
Just *how* heretical is Dr. Jacks?

There are many American Unitarians who would not object to being put beyond the Christian pale, because they do not themselves wish to be regarded as Christians; others, of the Humanist persuasion, do not wish even to be regarded as theists. By comparison with these American Unitarians, especially the latter type, Dr. Jacks is almost orthodox. In his remarkably good-tempered reply to his excommunicators, he says that the group of Unitarians he represents "feel themselves far too imperfectly acquainted with the technic of the Godhead to pronounce the Doctrine of the Trinity untrue," but are conscious of a bond with Trinitarians in their common belief that God is One, and "wish prosperity to all Christian Churches, caring little how they name or define the Godhead, provided it is really the Godhead, and not an idol made of words, they name and define, and real worship that is offered."⁵

If there is any persistent peculiarity in Dr. Jacks's conception of God, it is the idea which he shares with William James and Studdert-Kennedy, that God is really struggling and suffering in His warfare with the evil in the world, and really limited by the recalcitrancy of the human wills He has created.

Of the many Gods, or conceptions of God, that are offered me [he says] the only one I am concerned to believe in, and should find it a calamity not to believe in, is the God who is sympathetic, and *actively* sympathetic, on the lines of my determination to achieve a better-than-what-is. Omnipotence and

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 25.

Omniscience I could dispense with if need be; the disappearance of the Cosmic Potentate would not leave me orphaned; the Absolute does not enthrall me and I should suffer no nightmare were I to learn that it did not exist. . . . There is that in the world, call it what you will, which responds to the confidence of those who trust it, declaring itself, to them, as a fellow-worker in the pursuit of the Eternal Values, meeting their loyalty to it with reciprocal loyalty to them, and coming in at critical moments when the need of its sympathy is greatest. . . . If [one] chose to call it Christ, or more simply "the Spirit," I should not quarrel with him.⁶

If this be heresy, make the most of it! It undoubtedly leans towards the hypothesis of a limited deity, and its conception of God as co-partner with man has a Pelagian tinge; but as Karl Barth likes to say, in the one English sentence he has learned to repeat, "All the British are Pelagians!"—at least if a certain attitude of self-reliance is a symptom of Pelagianism. This much, at any rate, can be said, that there have been leading figures in the Church of England quite recently, who in their own way have been as heretical as Dr. Jacks. One of them—at least in his more vehement moments—was Studdert-Kennedy. Another, of a very different species, is Dean Inge.

2. PLATONISM: DEAN INGE

Dean Inge owes his immense popular following to the fact that he is accustomed under all circumstances to "tell the truth and shame the devil." Although the occupant for many years of a high ecclesiastical post,

⁶ *Religious Perplexities*, pp. 57, 58, 60.

he does not care tuppence for ecclesiastical authority, but forms his religious opinions in calm disregard of Creeds, Councils, and Anathemas—much to the delight of the laity. Although he is thus the darling of the lay public, and has written constantly for popular consumption, he makes no attempt to pander to the public taste, but devotes himself by preference to exposing popular fallacies and flouting popular prejudices—much to the delight of the clergy. Both clergy and laity appreciate his ability to flay errors—in other people—and if the lash of his wit sometimes strikes uncomfortably near home, they chuckle as they duck their heads and come back for more. After all, a strictly honest man, who speaks his whole mind without reserve or equivocation, utterly unconcerned about what anyone may think or say, is not to be met with every day in the week, especially in high ecclesiastical office, where caution and diplomacy are the rule. Dean Inge expounds the truth as he sees it with brazen straightforwardness, swerving for nothing—unless perhaps it be for some irresistibly tempting opportunity to make an epigram!—and so he has become the privileged court jester to the British people, liked and respected (if not always followed) as few public men have been in our time.

The circumstances under which he got his popular title, “the gloomy Dean,” are characteristic. Mr. Asquith, in 1911, nominated him to the crown for the Deanery of St. Paul’s. “I was much disposed to decline,” says Inge, “knowing that no power on earth could turn me into an ecclesiastic. . . . But I heard

from Downing Street that my friends had exerted themselves to procure my appointment, and that if I refused it would be a great disappointment to all who wished Liberal churchmanship to be represented in London. . . . I had no good reason except that I was very happy where I was [in a chair of Divinity at Cambridge] and that I was terribly bored by long musical services."⁷ Not long after, the new Dean was asked by the Women's Diocesan Association of London to give some lectures on "The Co-operation of the Church with the Spirit of the Age"—a subject which he admits gave him "a slight feeling of irritation, as he pictured himself the kind of treatment of it which was probably expected of him." By the time he came to deliver the first lecture, his irritation had evidently developed to the point of being something more than "slight." He made it exceedingly plain that he regarded the age in which he lived as a degenerate age, governed by nonsensical, dangerous, and mutually inconsistent shibboleths—Pragmatism, Progress, Democracy, Humanitarianism, Patriotism—all of these spirits of the age needing to be severely criticized by the Church in the name of the Spirit of the Ages, if the world was not to go straight to perdition. In 1911, this was a most surprisingly unconciliatory attitude for a liberal churchman to take; and a storm of protest arose from the press and the public. It was the *Daily Mail* which coined at this time the famous sobriquet which has stuck to him ever since: "the gloomy Dean."

⁷ From *Vale*, by W. R. Inge, pp. 67, 68. Quoted by permission of Longmans, Green and Company.

Undismayed by this unfavourable response to his first important public utterance, Inge turned upon his critics in his second lecture with a veritable trumpet blast of defiance. He said he supposed he was called "gloomy" in contrast with "certain more popular ecclesiastics, who, because they can always conscientiously shout with the largest crowd, are naturally cheerful deans." Such men might perhaps consider it "a kind of impiety not to float with the stream, a feat which any dead dog can accomplish, and a kind of treason not to lick the dirty boots of our masters for the time being, a complaisance which every live dog is glad to perform"; but he had already made it plain that he did not subscribe to the democratic dogma, and had no faith in the rightness of the majority. "I admit," said the now thoroughly embattled Dean, "that I am glad that crucifixion has gone out of fashion; but I hereby tell my critics that I do not care two straws for any abuse and unpopularity that I may incur in preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom as I believe our Master intended it to be preached."⁸ From that day—much to his own surprise—his popularity was assured; newspaper reporters hung upon his words in eager expectation of good "copy"; and as one catastrophe after another has tended to justify his original gloomy diagnosis of the national state of affairs, faith in his good judgement has steadily gone up.⁹

I shall be classified, I suppose [says the Dean] as belonging

⁸ See the account of this episode in Robert Shafer's article on "Dean Inge and Modern Christianity," *American Review* (V, 5-11).

⁹ "I think I may claim," says Inge, "that most of my predictions, which at the time some thought too lugubrious, were fulfilled in the unhappy years which have followed the War." (*Vale*, p. 84.)

to the right wing of theological liberalism. But I prefer to call myself a Christian Platonist, and to claim a humble place in the long chain of Christian thinkers whose philosophy is based on the Platonic tradition. That chain has been unbroken from the first century to our own day, and in English theology it has had a very honourable record. It should, I think, be recognized as a third school of thought in the Church, not less legitimate, nor less productive of good fruits, than the Catholic and Protestant parties, which in ecclesiastical politics are so much more active and prominent.¹⁰

This fair and accurate self-classification may serve as a text for our further discussion of Dean Inge's position. Let us consider him (1) as a *liberal*, (2) as a *right-wing liberal*, (3) as a *Platonist*, and (4) as a *Christian Platonist*.

(1) *Inge as a liberal.* The two distinguishing marks of English theological liberalism, as we saw in a previous chapter, are *intellectual breadth*, or the appeal from external authority to intrinsic truth, and *ecclesiastical breadth*, or the willingness to tolerate many divergent parties within one inclusive Church. Dean Inge qualifies as a Broad-Churchman on both counts. "It became clear to me," he says "as soon as I began to think seriously about the foundations of belief, that the centre of gravity in religion has shifted in our day, from authority to experience." The idea that the Church is infallible, as Catholics claim, seems to him "almost monstrous"; such a claim reflects "not the temper of Christ, but of the Jerusalem hierarchy which crucified Him." The idea that the Bible is infallible, as conservative Protestants

¹⁰ From *Outspoken Essays*, 2nd series, by W. R. Inge. Quoted by permission of Longmans, Green and Company.

claim, seems to him superstition. "The traditional views about the Bible have, in fact, been so riddled by criticism that they can no longer be held honestly by an educated man." It would be a mistake to say that no weight is to be given to the authority of Church and Bible; but Inge constantly judges these extrinsic authorities by two intrinsic authorities, "the inner light, and human reason"; i.e., the testimony of the mystics, and the testimony of science and philosophy.¹¹

As for the Dean's attitude towards the problem of ecclesiastical inclusiveness, it is succinctly expressed in the following passage which he quotes approvingly from *John Inglesant*: "The English Church, as established by the law of England, offers the supernatural to all who care to come. It is like the Divine Being Himself, whose sun shines on the evil and on the good." He is disturbed by the effort of the Anglo-Catholics to turn this National Church into a "sect" with well-defined theological principles, but glad to note that "attempts at heresy-hunts have collapsed ignominiously and a Liberal bishop today would have nothing worse to fear than the attacks of the ignoble obscurantist Press and an organized boycott by some theological colleges."¹²

On a number of particular theological points, Dean Inge's liberalism is especially evident. Most of them relate to the bearing of science upon theology. He is not disposed to accept the scientific view of the world as finally adequate for philosophy or theology; but within

¹¹ See *Vale*, pp. 32-39.

¹² *The Church in the World*, pp. 24, 18.

its own limited sphere, modern science constitutes for him a veritable new revelation, a "purgatory" through which traditional theology must pass.

One basic theological notion which is incompatible with scientific truth is supernaturalistic dualism, or the belief in miraculous divine interventions. Science cannot possibly tolerate such a notion. "If, for example, an outbreak of cholera might be caused either by an infected water-supply or by the blasphemies of an infidel mayor, medical research would be in confusion."¹³ While admitting that a life as uniquely significant as that of Christ might be expected to have some unusual occurrences connected with it, he stoutly insists that problems like the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection are "scientific and not religious questions," with "no bearing on the Divinity of Christ." "To make our belief in Christ as a living and life-giving Spirit depend on any abnormal occurrences in the physical world seems to me," he says, "to be an undetected residue of materialism."¹⁴ The testimony of the mystics to the reality of the Living Christ is more to the point.

To this fundamental break with tradition on the subject of miracle must be added the specific consequences of the three great scientific advances of modern times: Copernican astronomy, Darwinian evolution, and the historico-critical study of Christian origins. Copernican astronomy, thinks Inge, has not only destroyed the traditional pictures of heaven and hell, resurrection and ascension, but has also ruled out any belief in immor-

¹³ *Outspoken Essays*, 2nd series, p. 3.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

tality which involves continued existence in this world of time and space. Darwinian evolution has destroyed traditional ideas about the Fall of Man and Original Sin, and involves ethical consequences about kindness to animals, eugenics, and birth control—all of which orthodox Christianity stubbornly refuses to see.¹⁵ The Dean is very zealous in the endeavour to expose all geocentric and pre-Darwinian superstitions which may still be lurking in Christian theology; he is less convinced about the permanency of the results achieved by historical criticism. He thinks the eschatological view of the teachings of Jesus extravagant and perverse, and does not wonder that Loisy and Tyrrell were condemned by the Roman Church for holding so destructive a view; but on the subject of the sacraments, he thinks there is good evidence that the sacerdotal interpretation of the rites of Baptism and Communion—so dear to the Anglo-Catholics—owes more to the influence of the Greek mysteries than to the Founder of Christianity. “The dignity of the priestly calling,” he says, “is prophetic rather than sacerdotal. In the Eucharist it is an eternal act that we represent, not a temporal act that we repeat.”¹⁶

(2) *Inge as a right-wing liberal.* In spite of his pronounced liberalism on all these points, Dean Inge differs from pre-War Modernism so decidedly on other basic issues that he is properly to be called a conservative, or “right-wing,” liberal. For one thing, he has

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 36-45, 56, 59; cf. *Vale*, p. 54.

¹⁶ *Vale*, p. 62; see the essay on the Sacraments in *Contentio Veritatis* (1902).

no sympathy whatsoever with the *political liberalism* or Christian socialism which has so often gone with theological liberalism in modern times, and which appears so clearly in Campbell's *New Theology*. He has only scorn for the "sloppy socialism" which he thinks characterized the findings of the C.O.P.E.C. movement for Christianizing politics and economics; and he rejoices somewhat grimly in the fact that the War has made the world "permanently *unsafe* for democracy."¹⁷ Again, in spite of his friendship with L. P. Jacks, he has an ingrained distaste for *pragmatism*, which he defines as "an act of violence exercised by the will upon the intellect to make it accept what we find it helpful to believe"¹⁸—an obvious hit at James's "Will to Believe." *Bergson's anti-intellectualism* is dismissed with the remark that "a philosophy which has no place for intelligence is a contradiction in terms."¹⁹ *Eighteenth-century rationalism*, represented by Paley and the *Bridgewater Treatises*, also receives curt treatment, as a method of apologetics which Kant and Darwin have thoroughly exploded. "From finite things to infinite causes there is no road."²⁰ But the Dean's heaviest ammunition is reserved for the *idealistic philosophy* of the nineteenth century, and its two leading concepts: *the immanence of God* and *the idea of Progress*.

"There is no writer on the philosophy of religion," he says, "with whom I am in more general sympathy, and from whom I have learned more than Friedrich

¹⁷ *Vale*, pp. 23, 24, 116.

¹⁸ *The Church in the World*, p. 238.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

²⁰ *Things New and Old*, p. 71.

von Hügel.”²¹ The influence of von Hügel is especially evident in Inge’s growing emphasis upon the transcendence of God. In early life he had been under the influence of the British neo-Hegelians, Green and the Cairds, Bradley and Bosanquet; and he continues in his latest work to acknowledge the large measure of truth which he finds in their work.²² But after his studies in mysticism had brought him in touch with von Hügel, Inge came more and more to perceive the deficiencies in any view of God which represented Him as so “organic to the world” that He was entangled with its fortunes, growing with its growth, and—in strict logic—dying with its death. This objection applies not only to Hegel’s view of God as “Becoming” and Professor S. Alexander’s view of God as “evermore about to be,” but to A. S. Pringle-Pattison’s great Gifford Lectures on *The Idea of God*, which Archbishop Temple has called the *Summa philosophiae* of modern times.²³ Because Pringle-Pattison asserts that the world and finite minds are as necessary to God as He to them, Inge refuses to regard him as a theist, and contrasts with all such pantheizing immanentism the ancient Christian view that God, as Creator, is above and independent of His whole Creation.

If the being of God is bound up with the time-process [says

²¹ *God and the Astronomers*, p. 120.

²² Mr. Robert Shafer, in his otherwise excellent articles on Inge, seems to me to exaggerate the influence of the idealistic school upon his thought, and to ignore the importance of von Hugel’s influence. *American Review* (V, 15, 16).

²³ Nédoncelle, *La Philosophie religieuse en Grande-Bretagne de 1850 à nos jours*, p. 82.

the Dean] and if the theory of entropy is true (Eddington says we cannot hope to escape from it), then, as the whole universe is running down like a clock, God must disappear with it. And a God under sentence of execution is no God, however long it may be before the sentence is executed. To believe in God is to believe in a Being exalted above time and change, a Being Who created the world as the expression of His character and will, not as a condition of His existence.²⁴

Inge's objection to the idea of Progress is of a piece with his objection to extreme immanentism. He does not deny that the human race is young, or that science and invention open up for it a long and inviting prospect. He is not unduly pessimistic about the fate of Western civilization and of organized Christianity; indeed, since the chorus of post-War pessimism has begun to rise, he has opposed this mood of defeatism as resolutely as he opposed the foolish optimism which prevailed before the War. But against two notions he sets his face like flint: that the world *as a whole* can progress so that it will be easier to see divine perfection in it than it is today; and, that there is any guaranty of *automatic* progress, especially in the moral and religious sphere. He expresses a certain sympathy with

²⁴ From *Things New and Old*, by W. R. Inge, pp. 82, 83 Quoted by permission of Longmans, Green and Company. This is unfair to Pringle-Pattison, who, as my friend Dr. Peter Bertocci points out, "struggles . . . to keep God from 'perishing' with the time-process though the time-progress must be related to Him." But it brings out Inge's uncompromising attitude very clearly. A favorite quotation often repeated in his later writings is the following stanza written by Emily Brontë on her death-bed:

Though earth and man were gone,
And sun and universe should cease to be,
And Thou wert left alone,
Every existence would exist in Thee.

the modern hope of a "Christophany in redeemed humanity," a "Kingdom of God on earth," which is thought to be guaranteed by the beginning of a new humanity in the Incarnation and the gift of the Holy Spirit; but, frankly, he sees little in the Gospel, or in the history of the Church, to justify the hope. There will never be a great crowding into the narrow way that leads to life.²⁵ As for the view that any future progress of the race could involve progress in God, or that it is any easier to believe in Him if one makes unlimited drafts on the future, that is absurd—so absurd that to state the view is to reject it:

God at present (according to these apologists) seems to make a poor job of governing the world; we can only say of Him, with Dr. McTaggart, that He is "on the whole good rather than bad"—a restricted testimonial which would hardly procure an engagement for a housemaid except under post-war conditions; but He is gradually improving, and we must give Him time to "realize Himself."²⁶

(3) *Inge as a Platonist.* It will be seen that Inge, in spite of his own undeniable liberalism, has expressed disagreement with every important variety of liberalism that has appeared since the eighteenth century. But back of the eighteenth century there lies the English Platonic tradition, and back of that the mediæval tradition of Christian mysticism, and back of that, finally, the Neo-Platonic philosophy, which Inge regards as the final product of the greatest continuous period of philosophic thought in human history, and the perennial

²⁵ See *God and the Astronomers*, pp. 156-173.

²⁶ *Outspoken Essays*, 2nd series, p. 4.

fountain-head of the best Christian thought. In the philosophy of Plotinus, rightly interpreted, he finds a stable basis for religious faith in the modern world.

Translated into modern terms, the Platonic "ideas" are what we call "values" or "laws." The scientific world of mechanical law is a world that appears to be devoid of value, but it has at least truth-value of a special sort, closely connected with quantitative measurement, and is real in so far forth. The great mistake of modern times has not been the belief in the objective reality of the world of science, but the disbelief in the objective reality of the ideal values—especially of the three absolute values: Goodness, Beauty, Truth. These values have been wrongfully ejected from the world of fact, projected into the future or into the limbo of lovely illusions; actually, they are the most solid of all facts to him who is prepared to live in communion with them; and God is their eternal Ground.

The nature of God is not to be interpreted exclusively in ethical terms. Morality, strictly speaking, belongs to man and not to God; ours is the struggle between duty and temptation, while His is the victory. To make God too exclusively moral is to overshadow the values of Truth and Beauty, which are more certainly eternal than any human standard of right and wrong can be. Also, it is to make Him too Puritanical, which our sense of humour should forbid.

If we suppose [says Inge, in a justly famous passage of his *Confessio Fidei*] that His interests are about equally divided between the moral, intellectual and aesthetic aspects of His creation, so that He enjoys all the wonders which science

studies and all the beauties which art imitates, no less than the holiness of a saint or the self-devotion of a hero, then much which the mere moralist finds a scandal in the government of the world receives a satisfactory explanation. I have never understood why it should be considered derogatory to the Creator to suppose that He has a sense of Humour. The lack of this sense is considered a defect in human nature; and some of us would think that heaven would be very dull without it. The world is full of absurdities which to a superior Being may afford infinite merriment. Several of the animals are laughable, though few are really ugly; and many of the antics of our own species must seem exquisitely ridiculous to any one observing them from outside. We often, without meaning it, picture God as a sour Puritan. It would be easier to justify His ways to man if we pictured Him more genially.²⁷

Man's true destiny, to our modern Platonist, does not lie in this world of time and space. This world is a mere "vale of probation," whose evils—real enough, and not nearly so negative or so neatly explicable as Plotinus supposed—are doubtless meant to discipline the soul and drive its longings beyond this sphere to its true home in Eternity. Thither, by faith and disinterested love, man may ascend and dwell even now—as the mystics of every time and place bear witness—growing into the likeness of those ideal values he adores, and thereby being prepared for further faith and love. Thither, when life is done, man goes for fulfilment or for judgement—consisting in his ability or

²⁷ *Outspoken Essays*, 2nd series, p. 24. How seriously this is all meant, is dubious! Elsewhere, Inge raises objection to the attributing of personality to God in any such direct or simple sense as seems to be implied in this very anthropomorphic passage!

inability to appreciate the eternal values. He is not absorbed in God, as pantheists declare, since individuality is the source of some of the highest values, and no true value ever perishes; but he lives on in the presence of God, perhaps (as mediæval thought suggests, and Baron von Hügel repeats) in a state intermediate between his present temporal striving and that state of perfect timeless attainment which can belong to God alone. The faith and love by which he perceives this higher ideal world, and rises into it, are not opposed to science and philosophy; they are activities of the whole man, in which the mind's aspiration to reality is satisfied as it cannot be by discursive intelligence alone.

(4) *Inge as a Christian Platonist.* Dean Inge has been described as "a Neo-Platonist who happens to have been born in a Christian land." It must in fact be observed that the Hebrew element in his Christianity is quite secondary to the Greek; and he himself admits that, if need be, he could do without Christ and the prophets, and fall back on Plotinus.²⁸ One may question whether he could be so content to describe this world as a vale of individual soul-making, or accept so nonchalantly the impossibility of a just social order, if he had ever fully grasped the Hebrew idea of the Kingdom of God. Neo-Platonism has helped him solve the great theological problem of his *own* generation—the problem of science and theology—in that it has furnished him with "a religion the truth of which is not contingent on any particular events, whether past or future," which

²⁸ Concluding section of the *Confessio* in the *Outspoken Essays*, 2nd series, pp. 52, 53.

"no scientific or historical discovery can refute," and which "requires no apologetic except the testimony of spiritual experience";²⁹ but it has somewhat crippled him in his approach to the great economic and political issues of our generation. Amos and Jeremiah might have helped him to meet the new exigencies of our time, had he studied the prophets as faithfully as he studied the Greek philosophers.

Nevertheless it should be noted, in fairness to the candid Dean, that he bears eloquent testimony to the immense deepening and correction of the truth as it is in Plato which came through the Incarnation and the Cross. "So far as I can see," he says, "nothing but a personal Incarnation, and the self-sacrifice of the Incarnate, could either adequately reveal the love of God for man, or call forth the love of man for God. . . . Vicarious suffering—the suffering of the sinless for the sinful—remained a stumbling-block for the non-Christian world; and it is only in this doctrine that the sting of the world's sorrow and injustice is really drawn."³⁰ Moreover, it should be said that in his latest works—especially since his elaborate study of *Christian Ethics and Modern Social Problems*—Inge has shown a steadily growing appreciation of the Hebraic element in Christianity, especially for the Hebrew valuation of time, history, and social justice.

In *God and the Astronomers*, his last large philosophical work, he has laboured to show that "events in Time are relevant to the eternal order" and "things

²⁹ *The Philosophy of Plotinus*. Vol. II. p. 227.

³⁰ *Outspoken Essays*, 2nd series, pp. 46, 47.

of lasting moment really happen,"³¹ even if progress is not continuous, and even if nations, civilizations, and universes must die like individuals. He notes, quite correctly, that the Jews, while lacking any genuine idea of progress, had a "stubborn belief in the justice of God, which must be manifested on a large scale, in the fate of nations, as well as in the fortunes of individuals"; and this gave them an idea of God "firmly embedded in the historical process," entirely opposed to the Greek theory of historic "cycles" to whose endless and meaningless recurrence God in His Eternity was supposed to be quite indifferent.³²

To this same point Inge returns in his recent lectures at Cambridge, *Things New and Old*, where he gives the most persuasive and best balanced exposition of the Christian faith, in its relation to the problems of our day, that has ever come from his pen. If it is not so witty as the *Outspoken Essays*, nor so sharply critical, it at least makes plain that its author is something more than a great scholar, and a plain-spoken thinker; he is a sincere and humble Christian, to whom the whole Church owes a debt of gratitude for his gallant leadership in these difficult and distressful times. It is with real sorrow and regret that we read, in his recently published *Vale*, that he is "now on the shelf," finally retired from active endeavour; and we hasten to send him our own affectionate *Vale*, before he shall finally become a part of that Eternal World of which he has written so much. Of one thing we may think with some

³¹ *God and the Astronomers*, p. 124.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 166, 167.

satisfaction: heaven, once Dean Inge arrives there, cannot possibly be imagined as a dull place.³³

3. SCIENTIFIC EMPIRICISM: F. R. TENNANT

In striking contrast to the brilliant, epigrammatic style of Dean Inge is the precise, dully methodical style of the Cambridge theologian whom we have chosen to represent the scientific type of liberalism: Professor F. R. Tennant. The contrast is not accidental. Inge believes, like all Neo-Platonists, in intuition as a superior mode of knowledge, and characteristically jumps from thought to thought like a squirrel jumping from limb to limb, without much considering how he gets there. Tennant, like other scientific empiricists, distrusts all alleged intuitive certainties, and moves from thought to thought more like an inchworm than like a squirrel—always with at least four feet on some firm, empirical foundation, and the others waving tentatively in the air till they have found some equally firm object to take hold of. Tennant agrees with Inge in his belief that theology must be made to square with the *results* of the sciences; he goes beyond Inge in his insistence that the *methods* of theology, if they are to lead to a reliable body of doctrine, must be “a reasonable continuation, by extrapolation or through points representing new observations, of the curve of ‘knowledge’”

³³ The reader is doubtless acquainted with the lines, “Hark, the herald angels sing—Quietly, because Dean Inge Has arrived, and seems to be Bored with immortality!” We pronounce these lines a base libel, but can vouch for the truth of the following: Invited recently to attend an elaborate ecclesiastical ceremony in his honour, Inge replied on a post-card, “What do you think I retired for? W. R. I.”

which science has constructed.”³⁴ By virtue of this ideal of a genuinely empirical, reasonable, and, in the larger sense, “scientific” theology, Professor Tennant enters into the heritage of eighteenth-century natural theology, and stands in the succession of Newton, Butler, and Paley. He is excellently equipped for this rôle, having taken his *Tripos* in Natural Science at Cambridge and taught Natural Science for three years in a secondary school before taking up his work as cleric and theologian.

In a generation for which the name of Paley has become a subject of mild derision, it takes courage to stand in his succession. Tennant has probably sacrificed prestige by taking this stand; but ignoring the peril of unpopularity with truly scientific imperturbability, he declares that Paley’s teleological argument for the existence of God is *not* outmoded by Darwinism; it merely needs to be transferred from the adaptive relations of the individual organism to those of the world-process as a whole; while Butler’s famous dictum, “probability is the guide of life,” is still a better methodological guide for the theologian than all the mystical and pragmatic short cuts by which the nineteenth century tried to force its way to the Ultimate.³⁵ Let us consider, in briefest outline, how Tennant restates his eighteenth-century principles and methods in the light of the subsequent progress of science and philosophy, and how he applies them to the great peren-

³⁴ *Philosophical Theology*, Vol. I, p. 365.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 304; Vol. II, pp. 84 ff.

nial themes of Natural Theology: the World, the Soul, and God.

Tennant's theory of knowledge is worked out in the first and by far the larger of the two volumes of his great *Philosophical Theology*, entitled, *The Soul and Its Faculties*. It is a kind of modernized version of Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*, influenced of course by the scepticism of Hume and the criticism of Kant, and deeply indebted to the *Psychological Principles* of the late Professor James Ward, of Cambridge, which Tennant regards as "the greatest single work, of any age, on the human mind."³⁶ No theological presuppositions are imported into this psychological survey, and no theological conclusions are directly deduced from it; but certain epistemological conclusions emerge from it which are believed to be independently valid, and presumably acceptable to believers and agnostics alike, since "the epistemology of religious belief, like science of the physical world, can be expounded 'atheously'; indeed, so long as the *ordo cognoscendi* is pursued faithfully, exposition *must be atheous*"³⁷—i.e., without any assumption of the existence of God.

The conclusions which emerge from this rigidly non-partisan survey are the following: Of all theories of knowledge, *phenomenalism* corresponds most clearly to the psychological facts, and *mysticism* must be most firmly rejected. There is no *immediate* knowledge of God, as mysticism claims, and no religious "sixth sense" by which such extraordinary knowledge could come.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. vii.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 328. Not "atheistic," of course.

Religious experience is not an independent source of knowledge; if it is to arrive at any existent Reality, it must start with the same perceptual data that underlie all our other knowledge. Its unique "numinous" quality is not truly primitive, but even on the lowest levels already reflects some elementary act of theological interpretation. "He that would come to God must first believe that He is; revealed religion presupposes natural religion of some kind, if the presupposition here be logical not biographical."³⁸ Religious knowledge must therefore start like all other knowledge with common-sense apprehension of phenomena needing critical interpretation: "so-called knowledge of so-called actuality by so-called persons." There are three senses of the word "object," which must be carefully discriminated: the object as immediately perceived by the individual (*o*), the object as tested by consequences and socially verified (*O*), and the object as it really is (*ω*) which can never be immediately known but only approached as a limit on the line passing from *o* to *O*.³⁹

This is phenomenism, but not Kant's phenomenism. Kant said, "We only know phenomena." Tennant says, "We only know the noumenal through the phenomenal, the soul itself being the only known exception." Even in the case of the soul, there is a distinction between what is observed by introspection and the true or "ontal" self which must be assumed to account for the observed orderliness and unity of experience. But as compared with Kant, Tennant does not deny that

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 327.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 246-249.

real noumena or things-in-themselves are knowable.⁴⁰ They shine through the phenomena or appearances in which they present themselves, and are knowable by careful inductive reasoning and social testing such as are illustrated in all the empirical sciences.⁴¹ The world of science is not the whole real world; ideal values are as real as scientific facts; but values are unreal unless they are attached to some basis in observable fact. Perception is the only final basis of knowledge; from it we move out towards the ontal world, by faith and hypothesis, but to it we must constantly return for verification.⁴²

The empirical method thus laid down for natural theology is faithfully followed out in Volume II, on *The World, the Soul, and God*. Knowledge of God, it is admitted, is not so directly given as knowledge of the self and the world, which arise together as correlated concepts out of the flux of experience. The concept of God is a needed concept only if nature and man cannot be explained without it. Tennant's contention is that "Nature, when allowed to speak for herself, is suggestive of design";⁴³ and that when man is inter-

⁴⁰ Dr. Bertocci (a pupil of Tennant's) comments on this point: "There is a one to one correlation between the phenomenal and the noumenal order; the pattern is the same in the noumena, we must *infer*, but the exact nature of the noumena is unknowable." On Tennant's view of religious experience, he comments, "Tennant does not deny that there is religious experience, but he is sceptical about maintaining that this *experience* which is (phenomenal) *effect* is the result of a religious *cognition* of a (noumenal) *cause* without which the religious experience would have been impossible."

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 254-256.

⁴² *Ibid.*, Chap. XIII.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. ix.

preted as the creature in whom the purpose of Nature becomes articulate, the whole world-process becomes intelligible as it otherwise could never be.

The starting-point of the argument is the fact of *the lawfulness of Nature*, as discovered by science. Tenant rejects the Kantian explanation that this apparent lawfulness is imposed by man's mind, which gives regularity to the raw data of experience through imposing its own logical categories upon what is not logical in itself. Man *does* legislate for Nature to a considerable extent, he admits, but Nature's uniformity is "ontal," not merely "phenomenal." This ontal regularity of Nature is "the first link in the chain of facts which, while they do not logically demand, nevertheless cumulatively suggest as reasonable, the teleological interpretation in which theism essentially consists."⁴⁴ An opposite difficulty arises at this point: if Nature is as *completely, mechanically lawful* as Newton at first supposed, she is self-explanatory, and God is superfluous. But Newton's hope of reducing all physics to mechanics has now been shattered by the quantum theory and the Heisenberg principle of indeterminacy. Nature's alleged "simplicity" is no longer so apparent as it was in the eighteenth century. "Science is a struggle of man's discursive understanding with Nature's complexity."⁴⁵ Mechanical explanation is to be regarded as only one part of the true explanation of Nature; it must be supplanted, quite obviously, by *quasi-teleological* explanation in biology and *truly teleological*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

explanation in human history. Teleological explanations are *surely* legitimate in dealing with some phenomena, then; and *may* be legitimate in dealing with the world as a whole.

Of all the traditional arguments for the existence of God, the one which to Tennant has the most coercive force is the one stressed by Paley, the teleological argument from the fact of adaptation to the existence of Design. No one case of adaptation or beauty proves God *demonstratively*, as Paley thought; but the intricate interadaptiveness of all the fields of fact, including the moral and purposive life of man, presents an overwhelming weight of probability in favor of theism.

Further back than a creative Spirit it is neither needful or possible to go [says Tennant]. But further back than the world we can and must go, because the notion of a non-intelligent world that produces intelligent beings and makes itself intelligible, that can have no purposes and yet abundantly seems to bespeak one, etc., is not the clearest and most reason-satisfying conception that our minds can build in which to rest.⁴⁶

We have arrived, then, at the belief in an intelligent Designer, whose purpose for the world is perhaps best expressed in the moral will and conscience of man. What other attributes and activities besides moral intelligence are to be ascribed to God, as implied by the phenomena of the world? God must be assumed to be the Creator as well as the Designer of the world; for "if a demiurge arranges particles so that of them-

⁴⁶ From *Philosophical Theology*, by F. R. Tennant, pp. 110, 111. Permission of the Macmillan Company, Publishers.

selves they shall build a cosmos such as we have found our world to be, providing for the necessary epigenetic 'emergences' throughout its ramifying and interlacing tissues, he must be credited with the initial *determination* of the natures of his particles, and not merely with the collocation of them. . . . That determination can only be creation."⁴⁷ This does not mean, however, that God is *perfect* or *infinite* except in the ethical sense, nor *time-transcending* in a sense that involves the unreality of time, nor *absolute* in the monistic, idealistic sense. He is *personal*, but may conceivably be a community, whose unity is one of common purpose and deep fellowship.

Human freedom and evil really limit God's power. "The fact that evil exists in the world is a primary datum for the empirical theist, knowable with much more immediacy and certainty than is the being of God."⁴⁸ Its existence may be reconciled with the goodness of God. "God stands 'a hand-breadth off' to give His creatures room to act and grow: and here another limitation is involved—the self-limitation of love."⁴⁹ *Physical* evil is a necessary concomitant of Nature's regularity, without which moral life would be impossible. *Moral* evil must be possible if man's freedom is to be real; but it tends to defeat itself in the long run—which is the only truly *religious* sense in which God may be said to be omnipotent. *Transcendence* rather than immanence is indicated by the moral relation in which

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 123, 124.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

God stands to His creatures. The world is "planted out," other than its Maker, though God is its Ground and Maintainer and acts continually upon its relatively autonomous members. God is immanent enough to act directly upon man, but not so as to violate his freedom. Inspiration, grace, revelation are activities in which God takes the initiative, but is ever limited by human receptivity and never forces the door.

The argument culminates in a gesture toward the Christian revelation as the fulfilment of natural theology, and a challenge to agnosticism to deny the validity of this train of thought without also denying the reality of the world. "Christ," says Tennant, "possessed in fullest measure insight into the divine purpose in the world for man, and consequently into the divine nature, which God would have man acquire. He taught and also lived the truth as to God, man, the world and the relations in which they stand to one another, thus disclosing or making explicit what is implicit in the ethical theism which can claim to be a philosophically reasoned view of the world, based on knowledge in all its breadth."⁵⁰ The validity of this theistic world-view is clinched with a final turn reminiscent of Butler's *Analogy*. As Butler argued that it is difficult to doubt revealed religion without doubting natural religion for the same reasons, so Tennant argues that it is difficult to doubt God and the Soul without doubting the World. All three of these basic metaphysical ideas must be regarded as hypotheses, necessary to account for ob-

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 240.

servable phenomena; none of them is reasonable without the others. "God, man, and the world constitute a chord, and none of its three notes has the ring of truth without the accompaniment of the other two. . . . The cosmos is no logico-geometrical scheme, but an adventure of divine love."⁵¹

It will be noted that both of the distinctive emphases of the post-War period, the transcendence of God and the reality of evil, appear in Tennant as they appear in Dean Inge, but in quite a different context. With Inge, the transcendence of God is that of the realm of eternal values, and evil can be minimized because it belongs upon this temporal plane and our destiny lies elsewhere. With Tennant, the transcendence of God is that of ethical goodness,⁵² which grants freedom to its creatures so as not to violate their integrity, and evil is the consequence of that grant, ultimately to be overcome by the same divine love which made it possible. Inge is closer to von Hügel, Tennant to Studdert-Kennedy. Both stand in opposition to the immanentistic philosophy of the post-Kantian idealists, and the "Modernist" theology which was based upon it.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

⁵² Bertocci comments: "Transcendence of God is mainly ethical goodness, but also existential or ontal transcendence since He is Creator, immanent in his creation—though Tennant would not hold that the creation was *in time*." On the whole we may say that God and the world are more closely connected and interdependent in Tennant than in either Inge or A. E. Taylor or Temple. But he does not assert the interdependence of God and World with any such pantheistic emphasis as does Whitehead, and so may be reckoned among the less emphatic protagonists of the new transcendentalism—roughly, somewhere between Whitehead and Pringle-Pattison, on the one side, and Inge, on the other.

4. THE FUTURE OF LIBERALISM: STREETER, RAVEN,
MACMURRAY

One answer to the question of the future of liberalism in English theology has already been suggested by the foregoing analysis: it will rejuvenate itself by turning back for refreshment to the older liberalism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as Inge and Tenant have done. Another answer has been suggested by the cases of R. J. Campbell and W. E. Orchard: it will go over to orthodoxy, carrying into the orthodox fold a new spirit of tolerance and open-mindedness. Both these processes are actually going on. But there is a third possibility, partly illustrated by the case of L. P. Jacks: the pre-War, idealistic type of liberalism may perpetuate itself and save at least many of its central values by a radical change of front, which will bring it into alliance with certain fresh and original tendencies of the new age. What this would mean it is too early to predict; but some indications may be drawn from two sources: (1) the direction of theological change at Oxford, as illustrated by the series of symposia edited by Canon Streeter, and (2) the views of certain younger religious thinkers, who may be taken as barometers of the most recent tendencies.

Oxford, as we have seen, was the great stronghold of philosophical idealism before the War. When Streeter, in 1912, issued his first symposium, under the title, *Foundations: a statement of Christian belief in terms of modern thought, by seven Oxford men*, the idealistic basis of Oxford liberalism was still plainly visible.

Moberly, the philosopher of the group, was fully aware that pragmatism, Bergsonian intuitionism, and the new transcendentalism of Eucken and von Hügel were raising formidable objections to Absolute Idealism; he was prepared to agree, with the rest of the group, that current idealistic liberalism was too naïvely optimistic and needed an infusion of orthodox pessimism; but he still stood his ground, like Josiah Royce in this country, upon the proposition that the idealistic conception of God as the Absolute was at once the most irrefutable and the most religious view of God that had ever been framed.⁵³

It would be an interesting but somewhat lengthy process to trace the gradual dissolution of this view in the successive volumes issued under the editorship of Canon Streeter: *Concerning Prayer* (1916), *Immortality* (1917), and *The Spirit* (1919). For our purposes it will be enough to call attention to Streeter's own formal recantation of Absolute Idealism in his able volume, *Reality* (1926), where he sets forth a new theory of knowledge, "Bi-representationism," based upon the New Physics, and abandons the "tempered Absolutism" of T. H. Green and his successors for what he calls "the Higher Anthropomorphism."⁵⁴ Besides the influence of pragmatism and Bergsonianism (which is less evident in Streeter than in Dr. Jacks) and that of the New Physics (which is fundamentally important), one may note also the marked influence

⁵³ *Foundations*, Essay IX, "God and the Absolute." See especially the note on pages 480, 481.

⁵⁴ *Reality*, Preface and Chaps. IV and V, especially p. 141.

upon Streeter of the New Psychology, with which he was brought into contact through his friend and collaborator, Dr. J. A. Hadfield.⁵⁵ The psychological and psychiatric interest has led Streeter, as it has led many others, to what may be called a new Evangelicalism—a deeper interest than was characteristic of pre-War liberalism in the problem of personal redemption and moral power. His recent action in joining the Oxford Group Movement is a natural outcome of this trend. The New Physics, the New Psychology, the New Evangelicalism of the Oxford and other group movements are undoubtedly destined to colour the liberalism of the next generation, much more deeply than pragmatism and Bergsonianism, which have proved to be passing reactions.

Among the younger generation of religious thinkers in England today—a group tragically limited by the grim process of selection which consigned so large a proportion of the promising university men of 1914-1918 to the soil of Flanders—two figures stand out as particularly indicative of the trend of liberal thought: Canon C. E. Raven of Cambridge and Professor John Macmurray of the University of London. Both stand in the idealistic tradition and both are modifying it in characteristic ways, though neither has yet reached the stable *terminus ad quem* of his intellectual development. Like the “seven Oxford men” of 1912, they are sharply critical of orthodox traditionalism, but from new points of view.

Canon Raven recognises a debt to Frederick Denison

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Chap. IX.

Maurice and his pupils Ludlow, Kingsley, and Hort, for his Christian socialism, his belief in natural science as a revelation of God, and his sense of the compatibility between Biblical criticism and Christian faith.⁵⁶ He believes himself to have verified, by direct mystical experience, Maurice's conception of the Living Christ who is the Head of Humanity and not merely the Head of the Church. His scientific studies and war-time experiences have taught him to find this Christ revealed in the "secular" sphere—in biological growth and family love, in the soldier's sense of being sustained in the face of death, in the social passion of "atheistic" communism—often more compellingly revealed than in the "archaic survivals," the "rigid structure of dogma and ritual" of the Established Church.⁵⁷ In *The Creator Spirit*, Raven has endeavoured to interpret the whole biological sphere, in which he is expert, and the psychological sphere, in which he is a talented amateur, as the product of what Lloyd Morgan would call the "emergence" of that same divine Spirit made manifest in the Christ, so claiming for the Holy Spirit a vast region outside of ecclesiastical bounds. In *Jesus and the Gospel of Love*, and more recently in his contribution to the symposium on *Christianity and the Social Revolution*, he has endeavoured to claim for Christ the equally vast region of social struggle, where his Spirit appears in many who, like George Fox, do not observe "the credal, ceremonial and constitutional niceties"⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Two Letters, Dr. L. P. Jacks in reply to Dr. C. E. Raven and Dr. F. W. Dwelly, pp. 4-8.

⁵⁷ *A Wanderer's Way*, pp. 202-220.

⁵⁸ *Jesus and the Gospel of Love*, p. 7.

of the orthodox churchman, and who may even be engaged in the mistaken endeavour to destroy religion as the "opium of the people."

In the difficult and delicate task of analyzing the similarities and antagonisms between Christianity and communism, Raven is less expert than his philosophical collaborator, John Macmurray, who may claim to be an authority on Karl Marx. Macmurray is an heir of the Hegelian tradition in its "Personal Idealism" phase, but under the influence of Marx has gone over to what might be called "Personal Realism." He finds the Marxian philosophy deficient in its appreciation of the final metaphysical significance of personal values, as developed in direct face-to-face relations, but acute in its revelation of the insufficiencies and hypocrisies of a merely idealistic and verbal Christianity. He goes so far as to say that "Communism, whatever its exponents may say, has recovered that essential core of a real belief in God, which organized Christianity has in our day largely lost."⁵⁹ Communism, in other words, claims to disbelieve in the Christian God but acts as if it did, while modern Christianity claims to believe in Him but acts as if it did *not*. The synthesis of communism and Christianity is to Macmurray and Raven as urgent an issue as was the reconciliation of science and theology a generation ago. Whatever may be the solution of the problem, it may be predicted that it will bulk larger in the liberal theology of the future than any merely intellectual issue, its closest competitor being

⁵⁹ *Creative Society*, p. 24.

perhaps the problem of Church and State as raised by the emergence of militant nationalism in all parts of the world.

If the liberalism of the future will depart radically from the immanentistic idealism of Campbell's *New Theology* and Moberly's contribution to Streeter's *Foundations*, it will nevertheless conserve certain permanent results of that great philosophical movement which so richly fertilized the British mind in the sixty years before the World War. The lasting truth in this school of thought has been helpfully summarized by Professor C. C. J. Webb of Oxford in his recent lectures on *Religious Thought in England from 1850*. Himself a leading exponent of Oxford idealism during most of his long career, Professor Webb candidly admits that the period of consistent "immanentism" is now at an end; but he warns against too sharp a reaction in the opposite direction and names the following as the achieved gains of the movement: "the revelation of the unity which is present in the widest differences, and the elimination from religion of that character of sheer arbitrariness which has so often been attributed to it during its history by friend and foe alike."⁶⁰

As we turn in our next chapter to consider the Catholic and Protestant traditions, we shall have much evidence that the gains of nineteenth-century liberalism, in this general and moderate form, have become the common property of all the major Christian denominations and parties in contemporary England. If the emphasis

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

upon the unique and transcendent elements in the Christian faith is returning, after a period of excessive emphasis upon universality, continuity, and immanence, the change cannot be described simply as a reaction or reversion, but rather as a recovery of balance.

CHAPTER IV

CATHOLICISM AND PROTESTANTISM TODAY

THE two leading traditions in English theology are still the Catholic and Protestant traditions, best represented by the Anglo-Catholic party in the Established Church, and the Evangelical party within and without the Establishment. Roman Catholicism and Calvinistic or Puritan Protestantism are of significance chiefly as they exert a modifying influence upon these two primary traditions. The same may be said with added emphasis of liberalism in all its forms.

Liberal Christianity is not and has never been a religious *denomination* in England, with the single exception of the Unitarian Church. It has not even been a well-organized theological *party*, comparable with the Anglo-Catholic and Evangelical parties, since its adherents have always been free-lances, tilting at each other quite as much as at orthodoxy. If it ever was recognizable as a party, it was in the days of pre-War Modernism, when the great issues confronting Christendom were of a highly theoretical sort, concerning the adjustment between science and theology. To-day, when the burning issues are of a more practical sort, concerning the conflict between the Christian Gospel and our secularized, militarized, nationalized civilization, there is a distinct tendency to fall back upon historic first principles—Catholic, Protestant, or universally Christian—leaving the ironing out of theoreti-

cal difficulties for more leisurely times, and so throwing the differences between liberals and conservatives into a secondary place.

On the whole, this may be considered a healthy symptom. Dean Inge himself regards it as such. "A devout Christian," he says, "may be a Liberal Protestant or a Liberal Catholic; he can hardly be a Liberal without qualification."¹ The liberal type of Christianity, in other words, is better as an adjective leaning for support upon some vital religious tradition than as a detached substantive, setting up in business on its own. Religion, like government, operates best—at least in England—on a two-party system, in which the conservatives win about two-thirds of the time, but there is always an active opposition party, ready to criticize old slogans and try new experiments. Since the Reformation, the Catholic and Protestant parties have on the whole represented the conservative principle of continuity and the liberal principle of adaptability in Christian theology; but from time to time they have both been in danger of succumbing to obscurantism, and this has led to the formation of a liberal third party. Just before the War, it seemed that the Modernist movement, cutting across both the Catholic and Protestant churches, might replace Protestantism as the major opposition party, as the Labour party has come to replace the old Liberal Opposition in the political sphere. To-

¹ *Vale*, p. 74. This seems to imply an important change of position on his part. As we saw above (p. 72) in the Preface to *Outspoken Essays* (2nd series) he classified himself as a liberal, and insisted that the liberal movement was an important third party in English Christianity, alongside the Catholic and Protestant parties.

day, it is evident that neither Modernism nor any other form of liberalism is going to supplant the traditional division of Christendom into Catholic and Protestant—partly because Modernism has no vital religious message of its own and partly because it has succeeded in its mission of rescuing orthodox Christianity from obscurantistic opposition to modern science.

If Catholicism and Protestantism should ever draw so close together as to be indistinguishable, there might be room for a new theological opposition—"Fundamentalist" if the union had been made along liberal lines, "Modernist" if it had been made along conservative lines—but this new movement would have to possess at least as much positive religious fervour and vitality as the Protestant movement in the days of Martin Luther. A movement based exclusively upon intellectual negations and abstractions and ethical ideals, like pre-War Modernism, could never take the place of a movement which grew from a fresh access of religious faith and vision. The last positive outburst of vital religion in the English-speaking world was the great Evangelical revival which began under the preaching of Wesley and Whitefield in the eighteenth century, and continued to renew its strength until the death of Dwight L. Moody and Henry Drummond, in the closing decade of the nineteenth century. Only a form of liberalism which would equal Evangelicalism in religious power would be able to take the place of either Catholicism or Protestantism as a primary type of Christianity. Till then, liberal revolts will continue to be of temporary and secondary significance, like

most third party movements. They will render their greatest service when they have *passed into solution* as elements in the Catholic and Protestant traditions. Something of the sort is evidently happening just now.

I. CATHOLICISM: "ESSAYS CATHOLIC AND CRITICAL"

Before taking up the present theological position of Anglo-Catholicism, we may pause for a moment to consider the contribution of Roman Catholicism to contemporary English thought. Since the death of Baron von Hügel, no one figure of comparable magnitude has emerged among English Romanists. Yet in the literary world the Roman Catholic Church continues to be represented by a remarkably brilliant galaxy of writers and thinkers, many of whom have been converted to Rome in mid-career and thereby caused a considerable stir. First and foremost of this group, until his recent lamented death, was the well-beloved G. K. Chesterton, who had been fighting modern heresies with unflagging wit and indefatigable good humour for a full generation before finally following his own paradoxical reasoning to its inevitable conclusion and making his peace with the Vatican. Other distinguished writers who have gone over to Rome in recent years are Alfred Noyes the poet, Sheila Kaye-Smith the novelist, Ronald Knox the essayist, and Christopher Dawson the historian and social philosopher. Hilaire Belloc, who has always been a Catholic, acts as unofficial Dean of the whole group.

Among the official apologists of the Roman Church, Father M. C. D'Arcy, S.J., of Campion Hall, Oxford, is

always *persona grata* when called upon to represent his faith.² As an able exponent of the neo-scholastic philosophy, he has helped to convince many outside of his church that the central ideas of St. Thomas Aquinas are not bound up with Ptolemaic astronomy or the scientific mistakes of Aristotle, but take on new vigour when interpreted in terms of modern science. Dean Inge, in spite of his settled antipathy to the Church of Rome, has confessed his debt to this school of thought.³ A good evidence of the extent to which some contemporary English theologians are ready to follow the neo-scholastic line in their thinking is to be found in Dr. Hubert Box's recent book, *The World and God: the Scholastic Approach to Theism*. Professor Bouquet of Cambridge (Anglican) and Principal Micklem of Mansfield College, Oxford (Congregational), may also be mentioned as admirers of the scholastic philosophy.

Roman influence in the Anglo-Catholic party was perhaps at its maximum during the "Malines conversations" (1921-1925) between Cardinal Mercier and certain Anglo-Catholic leaders, with a view to reunion between Rome and Canterbury. The unfavourable reaction of English public opinion when these conversations were published by Lord Halifax, their repudiation by the Pope, and the rejection of the (reputedly) "Romanized" Prayer-Book by Parliament in 1927 and 1928, have driven many of the extreme Roman sympathizers out of the Anglo-Catholic party into the Church of

² He has contributed to many interconfessional symposia, such as *God and the Universe*, edited by J. L. May (1931), and *God and the World through Christian Eyes*.

³ *God and the Astronomers*, p. 14.

Rome—very much as Newman was driven to Rome by the unfavourable reaction to Tract 90. The Anglo-Catholic movement, relieved of this ballast, has reverted to the *via media* marked out by Bishop Gore, who throughout his long career combined the Tractarian emphasis upon Catholic tradition and Apostolic Succession with the liberal interest in Christian socialism, natural science and Biblical criticism, inherited from F. D. Maurice and his school. Since the death of Bishop Gore, no single outstanding leader of the Anglo-Catholic school has arisen to take his place, but the vitality of the movement has expressed itself in numerous collective undertakings and *pronunciamientos*. On the practical side, Anglo-Catholicism has distinguished itself not only by an interest in traditional forms of worship, but also by an ardent and effective ministry to the disinherited classes in society, and large contributions in the field of applied Christian ethics. The "Anglo-Catholic Summer School of Sociology," whose organ is the periodical called *Christendom* and whose leaders are Maurice Reckitt and V. A. Demant, has become an important focus for this side of the movement.⁴ On the theological side, the most impor-

⁴ I feel bound to say that although I have given no space in this book to this sociological side of Anglo-Catholicism, I have been more impressed and influenced by it than by anything else I have encountered in England. It has convinced me that Christian ethics and Christian social action should not be something "plastered on," something wholly separate from Christian theology, but something growing out of it by a deep organic affinity. The precise measures advocated by this school, such as Douglas Social Credit, cannot of course claim the same theological sanction as the central principles of ethics; but they are in carefully calculated harmony with those principles, and in my opinion thoroughly feasible. It was the Dean of Canterbury—not an Anglo-Catholic—who first introduced

tant publication of recent years has been the symposium called *Essays Catholic and Critical* (1926), which will probably rank with *Tracts for the Times* and *Lux Mundi* as a landmark in the history of Anglo-Catholic thought.⁵ To this volume we must devote close attention.

The *Essays* fall into three main parts. The first deals with the "presuppositions of faith"—divine revelation and human discovery, Catholic authority and Protestant freedom, rational criticism and mystical experience. The second part applies the method worked out in the first to the principal doctrines of the Christian faith—God, Christ, Sin and Atonement, etc.—on which Catholics and Protestants are largely at one; while the third part deals with the doctrines concerning the Church and the sacraments, on which they chiefly disagree.

The most characteristic essay in Part I is the essay on "Authority," by A. E. J. Rawlinson and Wilfred L. Knox. Authoritative teaching is here held to be an inescapable function in any religion which, like Christianity, has a specific historical character and claims to possess a divine revelation. The Church—not the Bible nor the individual Christian consciousness—is held to be the proper organ through which this function is to

me to Douglas Credit; but my adherence to this program for securing economic plenty and justice for all has been greatly strengthened by the writings of Reckitt and Demant. I do not take back a word of what I wrote about Social Credit in my *Realistic Theology*.

⁵ Cf. Stewart, *A Century of Anglo-Catholicism*, p. 215. "In *Essays Catholic and Critical* we have before us at its best what the Anglo-Catholic movement means today. . . . We are at least as far beyond *Lux Mundi* as in *Lux Mundi* we were beyond *Tracts*."

be exercised but the authority of the Church is not "oracular" nor infallible, and must constantly be prepared to answer for the intrinsic truth of its assertions "*at the threefold bar of history, reason and spiritual experience.*"⁶ The external test to which this conception of authority makes appeal is a modification of the old *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*. A doctrine which demonstrates its ability to survive and win general consent in Christendom is reckoned good Christian doctrine. But the "survival" in question is defined as "the stubborn persistence of a continuously criticised, tested and verified tradition"; and the "consensus" in question is "a genuinely free consensus of competent and adequately Christian minds."⁷ If local and sectarian beliefs are not accorded the weight of authority which attaches to ecumenical doctrines, it is nevertheless recognized that "*some* degree of rational authority attaches to every doctrine or practice which at any time or in any place has commanded the serious allegiance of Christians";⁸ and it should be the endeavour of a truly Catholic theology to make a place for all such minor aspects of truth somewhere in its comprehensive system. The essay closes with a frank admission that authority, so interpreted, leaves the door open to "Modernism"; but insists that the *fear* of Modernism, even though it be really destructive as alleged, betrays "a lack of trust in the power of the Church to eliminate false teaching from her system"—not, be it

⁶ *Essays Catholic and Critical*, p. 95.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

understood, by proscription of heretics so much as by the survival of truth in a process of fair and open criticism.

The other two essays in Part I are in essential harmony with this view of authority. The first, on "The Emergence of Religion," by Dr. E. O. James, a fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute, is notable for the thoroughly objective and naturalistic account which it gives of religious origins. The theory of a "primitive revelation," formerly so popular with orthodox apologists, and still so strongly urged by Roman Catholic investigators like Father Schmidt, is referred back from science to theology, with the remark that there is no anthropological evidence for it. "Primitive monotheism" is granted to be real, but its concept of a "remote High God or beneficent Creator" is very different from the higher types of monotheism. "It would seem," says James, "that God led man on to a knowledge of Himself chiefly through natural means."⁹ It was only in the prophets of Israel that revelation in the full supernatural sense of the word may be said to have begun; "a self-revelation given directly by God and not mediated through reflection on the natural universe,"¹⁰

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 27. This somewhat naïve view of revelation as wholly unmediated is not to be taken as characteristic of the whole group of contributors, but rather as the amateurish remark of a scientific layman unversed in theology A. E. Taylor would not subscribe to it, I think, but would substantially agree with Temple's theory of revelation as "the coincidence of event and appreciation." What troubles me sometimes is the wide gap between the crude type of supernaturalism that prevails among the Anglo-Catholic laymen, and is propagated by cheap tracts, and the noble philosophic transcendentalism that prevails among leading Anglo-Catholic theologians. Can nothing be done to close that gap, and

which fulfils and corrects the previous natural revelation as it was itself later to be fulfilled and corrected by the revelation in Christ.

The second essay on "The Vindication of Religion," by Professor A. E. Taylor, author of the well-known Gifford Lectures on *The Faith of a Moralist*, is an able defence of theism on rational grounds, following the order of thought laid down in St. Bonaventura's *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*: consideration of what is *around* and *below* us (Nature), *within* us (Conscience), and *above* us (the divine and eternal values which are apprehended in the religious experience of the Holy). All three approaches, the natural, the moral, and the religious, converge upon the conclusion that the temporal world rests upon an eternal Ground; but whereas the spectacle of Nature leads us only to the thought of an "eternal intelligent designer," and the phenomena of the moral life lead one to faith in "the eternal something before whom we must . . . kneel in reverence as the source and support of moral goodness," the religious experience ushers us into the presence of the Holy One Himself. In all three realms, rational sifting of the data is required, but in all three, the authority of the expert must be appealed to.

Who are the experts? [asks Taylor]. The true "expert critic" of the constructions and hypotheses of science is the man who has already learned what the men of science have to teach him.

rescue the laity from superstition, or must Anglo-Catholicism—like Roman Catholicism—continue to teach two apparently irreconcilable and contradictory theologies? Is one's reputation for Catholicism likely to be inspired if one attacks popular superstitions?

The true expert critic of the painter or the musician must first have learned to see with the painter's eye and hear with the musician's ear. . . . So the verdict on the religious life if it is to count must come from the men who have first made it their own by living it. Only they can tell "how much there is in it."¹¹

It will be seen that Taylor in his philosophic approach and James in his anthropological approach to the problem of religious knowledge make an ultimate appeal to authority and revelation, while Rawlinson and Knox in their discussion of authority make an ultimate appeal to rational criticism and experimental verification. In so doing, they illustrate the meaning of the words "*Catholic*" and "*Critical*" in the title of the volume. It is the earnest contention of all the members of the group that Catholic authority and scholarly freedom, divine revelation and human reason, far from being antagonistic principles, represent "tempers of the religious mind which only reach their maturity in combination." In contrast to Karl Barth, who believes that everything savouring of "natural theology" is the result of human pride and belongs to Antichrist, these Anglo-Catholics believe there is a fundamental harmony between "everything in us that acknowledges and adores the one abiding, transcendent, and supremely given Reality, God" and "that divinely implanted gift of reason by which we measure, sift, examine, and judge whatever is proposed for our belief,

¹¹ From *Essays Catholic and Critical*, edited by E. G. Selwyn, p. 80. Permission of The Macmillan Company, Publishers.

whether it be a theological doctrine or a statement of historical fact, and so establish, deepen, and purify our understanding of the truth of the Gospel.”¹²

In Part II we see the consequences of this method when it is applied to the fundamental Christian doctrines. The essays in this section may be grouped under three main heads: (1) God; (2) Christ; (3) Sin, Grace, and Atonement.

(1) *God*. The important essay on “The Christian Doctrine of God” is by Lionel S. Thornton, author of *Christ the Incarnate Lord*. In this essay, as in his larger work, he makes use of the concept of “emergent evolution”—matter, life, mind, etc.—as developed by Alexander and by Lloyd Morgan in their Gifford Lectures. From the naturalistic point of view, of course, each new epoch in this process is marked by the appearance of something unpredictably “given,” which must simply be “acknowledged” with “natural piety.” From the religious point of view, this same process appears as a process of divine self-disclosure, which begins with a general revelation in inorganic nature, becomes more and more definite as the human level is approached, and reaches its climax in the Incarnation. The various attributes of God correspond to the various stages in this process, and remain valid as rationally distinguishable aspects of God even when the last stage is reached.

God stands to man [says Thornton] in a series of relations as Creator to creature, Deity to worshipper, Lawgiver to conscience, Sinless to sinful. . . . Finally through the Incarnation

¹² Preface, by E. G. Selwyn, p. vi.

in its whole context and issues God is revealed as Love and Mercy, as Father, Saviour and Friend.¹³

In the earlier stages of the divine self-disclosure it is God's majesty and transcendence that are most evident, and His friendliness appears only as a paradoxical hope. The paradox of divine exaltation and divine nearness is never wholly resolved; but in the doctrine of the Trinity there is the best possible formula for its solution. The God who is the hidden Ground of all Being, the God who discloses Himself in the Incarnation of His Word, and the God who prepares us inwardly, by His Spirit, to receive the Word, are here declared to be "*Three Centres of One Activity*";¹⁴ and these three centres are united with one another in a mysterious fellowship which is "partially and imperfectly but truly reflected in the fellowship of the Christian community."¹⁵

(2) *Christ.* In the essays on Christology, the influence of Catholic dogma and tradition is much more evident than in any of the essays that precede. If Dean Inge can say with truth that "Anglican Liberalism is for the most part orthodox about the Person of Christ,"¹⁶ how much more meticulously orthodox must a Catholic be, considering that formal judgement has been given upon this matter at one of the ecumenical councils of the "undivided Church," the Council of Chalcedon! In J. K. Mozley's essay on "The Incarnation,"

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

¹⁶ *The Church and the World*, p. 18.

the Chalcedonian Christology is defended, not as a final philosophical *explanation* of the Church's faith in Christ as both God and man, but as the great *bulwark* of that faith against all minimizing explanations which threaten to undermine and destroy it. Among the aforesaid "minimizing explanations," the doctrine that incarnation is but the highest form of divine immanence is selected for express condemnation. "It is not," says Mozley, "as though immanence and incarnation were two theological ways of expressing the same thing. They are the beginnings of two different religions, though along the divergent lines there may be points of resemblance."¹⁷ It is characteristic of Catholic Christianity to worship *Christ Himself* and not merely *something in Him*.

If Catholic dogma and tradition are thus taken as authoritative, it is not in defiance of historical criticism. Mozley himself refers the doctrine of the Virgin Birth to an *Appendix on Miracle*, where he treats it with evident sympathy as "congruous" with the belief in the Incarnation, but not capable of independent proof apart from acceptance of the more fundamental belief.

Sir Edwyn Hoskyns, in his essay on "The Christ of the Synoptic Gospels," grapples seriously with the problem raised by the apparent contrast between the synoptic "Jesus" and the "Christ" of St. Paul, St. John, and Catholic faith. He rejects as historically unsound the liberal Protestant theory that the "Christ" of faith was the product of "the gradual apotheosis of a Jewish prophet under the influence of Greek-Christian belief

¹⁷ *Essays Catholic and Critical*, p. 195.

and worship,"¹⁸ and he finds the Pauline conception of Christ rooted in the synoptic teaching itself. "The contrast," he says, "is not between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith, but between the Christ humiliated, and the Christ returning in glory; the two being held together by the title Son of Man which suggests both."¹⁹

In E. G. Selwyn's essay on "The Resurrection," one finds an equally critical appeal to the documents united with an equally ardent faith that the traditional interpretation of the documents is the correct one. Summarizing the Apostolic message concerning the Resurrection, he finds it largely supported by the Gospel record of the "Appearances" of the Risen Christ, which are susceptible of treatment as veridical mystical experiences. The analysis of these appearances, in terms of the commonly recognised types of mystical experience and the tests of objectivity imposed by Catholic critics of the mystical life, is the most original and convincing part of the essay. A large part of the Catholic faith in the meaning of the Resurrection, and *all* of it so far as the Ascension is concerned, could be conserved upon this mystical theory of the appearances, thinks Selwyn. But since the faith in Christ's literal "victory over death" seems to require something more unique than mere *survival*, he concludes that for us, as for the first disciples, the evidence of the appearances needs to

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 177. Sir Edwyn Hoskyns has lately become much interested in the Barthian interpretation of the New Testament, and has translated Barth's *Romerbrief* into English. His favourable attitude toward Barth is quite exceptional in England, and it may be doubted whether he can become thoroughly Barthian without ceasing to be Anglo-Catholic.

be supplemented by that of the Empty Tomb, to point us to the full meaning of the Mystery of the Resurrection.

(3) *Sin, Grace, and Atonement.* The pressure of orthodoxy relaxes in the section on Sin, Grace, and Atonement. After all, as Kenneth Kirk reminds us, there is no "conciliar definition" of the Atonement, as there is of the Incarnation;²⁰ while as regards the doctrine of Sin and Grace the Catholic doctrine has always been more "liberal" than the strict Augustinianism of the early Protestants. One is not surprised, therefore, to find Dr. E. J. Bicknell admitting that the discovery of man's descent from the anthropoids, and of the legendary character of the opening chapters in Genesis, compels us to provide an entirely new theological framework for the doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin, the only indispensable requirement being that theology should be true to the consciousness which pervades all Christian tradition and experience, "that we ourselves and human society are not what God intended us to be, and that our present condition is a libel on human nature as He purposed it."²¹

In Mozley's contribution on "Grace and Freedom" it is made evident that the "grace" which rescues us from our "present condition" is not to be confined to the Church or the sacraments, nor conceived in an impersonal, mechanical way, so as to violate man's moral freedom. "When we speak of the grace of God," says Mozley, "we mean that the divine favour goes

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 270.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

forth towards man and rests upon him to bless and strengthen him.”²² Grace is thus as universal as God’s working, which must not be excluded from anything but sin; and yet the “full measure of His graciousness” is manifested only in the Cross, and the influences that flow from it.

These influences are not only moral and subjective, but sacrificial and objective. In Kenneth Kirk’s essay on “The Atonement,” full justice is done to the “moral influence” or “exemplarist” theories of the Atonement; but it is maintained that they state only a part of the full Catholic doctrine. The death of Christ not only brings new life to individual sinners; it enables humanity as a whole to express penitence for its corporate guilt, and so close the gulf of estrangement between God and man which could not otherwise be bridged. “There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin.”

With this reference to the objective stream of sacrificial grace which proceeds from the Cross, we are brought to the verge of those special doctrines concerning the Church and the sacraments which form the chief stumbling-block for the Protestant when he endeavours to accompany the Catholic into his Holy of Holies. In Part III of the *Essays Catholic and Critical*, we are ushered step by step into the inner sanctuary, until we finally arrive at a view of Christ’s Real Presence, as priest and as victim, in the Mass, which would fully justify the practice of adoring the reserved sacrament; but we arrive there by such gradual stages, so

²² *Ibid.*, p. 241.

rationally and so logically, that we rub our eyes and pinch ourselves—if we are unsacerdotal Protestants—to make sure that it is really we who have been so smoothly translated into this numinous realm of intense and genuflections.

The first step in our translation follows naturally enough from the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Atonement. If in Jesus Christ God veritably became united with our race, for its regeneration, this union must have been permanent, and no mere passing episode. The divine-human life of the Incarnate Word must be continued in the divine-human life of the Church, which forms His living Body, ever guided and ever renewed by His Spirit. In the two introductory essays on "The Spirit and the Church in History" (Eric Milner-White) and "The Reformation" (A. H. Thompson), we are confronted with such historical realism, such tolerance and appreciation in respect to Protestantism and Modernism as well as Roman Catholicism that our suspicions are well-nigh set at rest. Particularly impressive are Milner-White's interpretation of the great scientific crisis of the nineteenth century as an illustration of the teaching office of the Spirit, and Hamilton Thompson's appreciation of the necessity of the Reformation. The Protestant reader of these essays would surely not be insulted by the suggestion that Protestantism stands to the Church Catholic in some such relation as "the sermon stands to the Eucharist or momentary prayer to age-long liturgy."²³

It is just at this point, where we pass from the pul-

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 340.

pit to the altar, from the general presence of the Spirit in the Church to its special presence in the sacraments, that we cross the great divide that separates most Protestants from Catholicism, whether Roman or Anglican. We find it difficult to see the connection between an anxious concern for ceremonial exactitude and the spirit of One who denounced ceremonialism as vigorously as did His prophetic predecessors. It is reassuring to find Professor N. P. Williams noting this apparent incongruity, and somewhat breath-taking to see how he converts it, by a dexterous twist, into an argument for sacramentarianism:

If our Lord, with all His indifference to mere ceremonial, did actually "institute" the rites known as "sacraments," then those rites must be of the very highest and most central importance in the Christian life; and it is difficult to see how such an importance can be ascribed to them, unless it is the case that through them God does something for men which man cannot do for himself, that is, unless they are the means or vehicles of supernatural grace.²⁴

It must be confessed that Professor Williams's endeavour to establish the "Dominical institution" of the *four* fundamental sacraments impresses one as a triumph of special pleading rather than as credible history—like many other attempts to find a charter in the New Testament for modern practices—and his argument against the preponderating influence of the pagan mysteries upon the Christian sacraments impresses one as true but unimportant. After all, if the Spirit of Christ is really guiding His Church, can that

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 373.

Spirit not consecrate to Christ's use whatever is able effectively to serve His purposes? If it be admitted, as all these writers do admit, that our Lord's mental outlook was truly human and limited, in the days of His flesh, must He be represented as having foreseen and foreordained everything the Church was to do, like an omniscient Lawgiver drawing up an ecclesiastical constitution? Of the two opposite tendencies which appear in these essays, the tendency to Catholicize the teachings of Jesus and the tendency to admit the innovations of the Spirit, one ventures to hope that the latter will eventually prevail. *Continuity* between Jesus, the Apostles, and Catholic Christianity is of great religious importance, and historically secure; *identity* between them, so great as to amount to preformation in the mind of the Master, is of no great religious importance, and probably contrary to fact.

These observations apply with special force to the final essay of the volume by Will Spens, on "The Eucharist." Its thesis that Jesus actually "appointed" certain "sacerdotal acts," to be continually repeated so that the benefits of the Incarnation and the Cross might be made available for "successive generations," assumes a kind of doctrinal elaboration and distant historical perspective in the mind of Jesus that are most improbable and artificial. Yet there are the germs in this essay of a theory of the Eucharist that might almost convert a Protestant to sacramentalism; the theory, namely, that the Real Presence of Christ in the Church needs special "effectual symbols" to convey it to the believer; and whatever symbol is chosen is thereby invested with

power to create experience of a definite sort, just as the value of a token coin actually *is* whatever a responsible government decrees it to be, because the whole credit of the State is behind the decision. When Catholics are ready to grant, as these writers are, that divine grace is not confined to sacramental channels, Protestants surely can afford to agree that the presence of Christ residing in the Church can be specially conveyed by certain solemn corporate acts, whereby the individual member is made the recipient of the common heritage. He who despises such ceremonials shows much the same captious spirit as a man who might refuse to have his marriage solemnized by the community, on the ground that love was enough to sanctify the relationship. In the marriage relationship between Christ and the Christian there is a third interested party, the Christian community; and by her ancient ritual of Communion she not only *symbolizes* the union between the Christian and his Lord, *she mediates it and makes it real*. It is one great value of contemporary English theology to the average American Protestant that it presents this great Catholic idea to him in a form that is more comprehensible and credible than that in which it appears in Roman Catholic theology.

2. PROTESTANTISM: JOHN OMAN

We have lingered over our description of Anglo-Catholicism because it is more unique and so more instructive than any other current school of thought in England. But it would be wrong to give the impression that it is more *alive* than other schools of thought. Prot-

estantism in England is very much alive, and on the march. Of the contemporary developments in Protestantism two are particularly worthy of note: the rise of Liberal Evangelicalism, and the closing of the gulf between the Puritan and Evangelical traditions.

Evangelicals, by their own confession, have generally been "more conspicuous for their personal influence than for any depth or originality of theological speculation."²⁵ The founders of the Evangelical movement in the eighteenth century were more interested in sound conversion than in sound theology; and the rationalism of the period had made them deeply suspicious of theological speculation. Wesley's well-known rule about theological opinion was to "think and let think." Whitefield's was equally simple: "The Spirit of God," he said, "is the centre of unity, and whenever I see the image of my Master I never enquire of them their opinion."²⁶ As time went on, the views of the Evangelicals hardened about a few simple "fixed points" of doctrine connected with regeneration,—especially the Blood Atonement,—and they refused to be drawn into dispute about these fundamentals. The consequence was that the brunt of theological labour in the nineteenth century fell upon the heirs of the Puritan tradition (the Presbyterians and Congregationalists) while the heirs of the Evangelical tradition (the Methodists, Baptists, and Low Church Anglicans) made very little contribution to theology.

²⁵ *Liberal Evangelicalism*, p. 29 (quoted from Hunt's *Religious Thought in England in the Nineteenth Century*).

²⁶ *Ibid.* (Quoted from Tyerman's *Whitefield*, Vol. I, p. 297.)

The Presbyterians and Congregationalists still maintain their theological pre-eminence in Protestant England; but they are no longer alone in the field. In recent years, there has been a marked increase of theological interest among Methodists and Baptists; while in the Church of England a new party, the Liberal Evangelicals, has come into being, which deplores Evangelical backwardness in theology, and has published a vigorous symposium with a view to correcting it. Among the members of this group Canon V. F. Storr is outstanding as a theologian. Among Baptists, the most eminent theologian is Dr. Wheeler Robinson, who shares with Dr. W. R. Matthews (the new Dean of St. Paul's) the editorship of an important series of theological monographs known as the *Library of Constructive Theology*. Among Methodists of the older generation Dr. Maltbie is generally recognized as the theological spokesman of the denomination; while among the younger preachers and thinkers there is much interest in the attempt of such men as Leslie Weatherhead and E. S. Waterhouse to relate Christian thought to the new developments in psychology. Such an interest is as natural and inevitable for Methodists as it is for the adherents of the Oxford Group Movement, who must emphatically be ranged in the ranks of the Evangelical leaders. As a clear example of the influence of the Oxford Group Movement upon theology, we may cite Canon Grensted's *Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, written when he was most under the influence of the Group Movement, and approaching its problem char-

acteristically from the angle of present-day experience of spiritual guidance.

While the Evangelicals are thus coming to share the theological concern which the sons of the Puritans have never lost, the latter in turn are approaching a full irenic solution of the issues between Calvinism and Arminianism, over which Protestants were once so deeply divided. Wheeler Robinson, speaking for the Baptists, expresses the whole situation succinctly when he says, "Such controversies as those between the Calvinist and the Arminian as to divine grace and human freedom are not so much settled as superseded; we have caught a deeper glimpse of Christian experience in its unity."²⁷ It would be hard today to find an English Presbyterian or Congregationalist who believed in all the "Five Points of Calvinism" without qualification. Confronted by the profound and disturbing issues raised by modern radical thought and social unrest, Puritanism and Evangelicalism alike have found themselves driven back upon the fundamental principles of the Reformation and the Gospel, and their old differences have vanished. In the face of the advancing Anglo-Catholic movement, all the Protestant forces of England today, within and without the Established Church, are being driven into a common uncomfortable dilemma: Can they or can they not give voice to a Gospel that has sufficient body, vitality, and unanimity to make upon the layman some other impression than that of a confusion of tongues? If they cannot, they must all assuredly decrease, while the Anglo-Cath-

²⁷ *The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit*, p. 203.

olics continue to increase. So far, no Protestant manifesto has appeared which can compare in significance with the *Essays Catholic and Critical*; though the Protestant symposium on Christology, *The Lord of Life*, does not suffer by comparison with the parallel Anglo-Catholic volume entitled *Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation*.

In the absence of any adequate collective expression of contemporary English Protestantism, we shall choose a single figure to represent the present state of Protestant theology. A generation ago, that figure would undoubtedly have been Principal P. T. Forsyth of Hackney College, London, a leading figure in the Congregational Union and in the so-called "Modern-Positive Movement" in theology. Since his death, the theological leadership of Congregationalism has passed to a very able group of leaders: A. E. Garvie, former Principal of New College, London; Sydney Cave, Principal of New and Hackney Colleges, now united; Principal Micklem of Mansfield College, Oxford; and Principal Whale of Chesunt College, Cambridge. None of these, however, has shown such striking originality of thought nor exerted so wide an influence as Forsyth; and it may fairly be said that the mantle of Forsyth has descended upon a Presbyterian, John Oman, who recently retired as Principal of Westminster College, Cambridge. Oman's books have been widely influential in Protestant circles, and are mentioned with respect by Anglican theologians of various schools, from the *Essays Catholic and Critical* to Tennant's *Philosophical Theology*. His principal theological work, *Grace and*

Personality, has already become a classic; while his more recent work on the Philosophy of Religion, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, is a monument of erudition and patient constructive argument. Since the later of these two books logically precedes the earlier, we shall review them in reverse order. Together, they form an impressive body of Christian thought.

The word "supernatural" is one of those troublesome words which make difficulties for the Christian thinker whether he uses them or refuses to use them. For some time, Liberal Protestantism has been fighting shy of the word "supernatural" because of its association with the eighteenth-century conception of "miracle" as the lawless caprice of an arbitrary deity. But by disclaiming belief in the supernatural in this sense, Liberal Protestants have become involved, more than they meant to be, in the assumptions and limitations of a merely naturalistic philosophy, which denies the existence of any transcendent spiritual reality higher than man, and interprets the "natural" in terms of the "material" and "mechanical." Principal Oman is therefore illustrating a significant trend of the times when he boldly puts the word "supernatural" in the title of his book, and endeavours to rehabilitate it by redefining its legitimate scope; which obliges him to lean heavily against the prevailing concepts of modern philosophy, and question many commonly accepted assumptions. This gives to his whole argument a somewhat tortuous, warily critical, painfully alert and subtle character.

The main thesis of the book appears in Part I. It is, in brief, that the religious experience of the holy and

the sacred is not merely a peculiar reaction of the human organism to certain aspects of the natural environment, but represents a reaction to a supernatural Environment, overflowing the natural order but just as real and regularly open to experience (when the proper conditions are met) as is the pressure of the physical atmosphere or the influence of habitat upon species. "As here used," says Oman, "the Supernatural means the world which manifests more than natural values which stir the sense of the holy and demand to be esteemed as sacred. . . . Part of what we experience is natural, in the sense that its values are comparative and to be judged as they serve our needs; and part of it is supernatural, in the sense that its values are absolute, to which our needs must submit."²⁸

In Part II, Oman takes up the problem of knowledge, and finds the root of our current naturalistic prejudices in a refusal to admit that there is any other kind of knowledge besides scientific explanation. But scientific knowledge is not the whole of knowledge; it is only one highly specialized form of knowledge, subordinate, for its final interpretation, to that general "awareness" from which all knowledge springs. It is superior to general awareness in precision, but inferior to it in balance and richness. An eloquent and ingenious chapter on "Awareness and Apprehension" argues that, for dealing with our environment as a whole, the poet's form of awareness and the child's naïve perception are more faithful guides than the scientist's measurements and analyses. In his suspicious attitude to-

²⁸ *The Natural and the Supernatural*, pp. 71, 72.

ward scientific method in the field of religion, as tending to corrupt and pervert our perception of Reality, unless we begin with "the highest awareness and the greatest world that can be apprehended," and continually return to it for correction, Oman stands in sharp contrast to his friend and neighbour, Professor Tennant. Both are empiricists, but for Tennant empiricism means faithful allegiance to scientific method as *the way of knowing*, while for Oman empiricism means faithful allegiance to our intuition of the total richness of life, and a critical attitude toward all scientific over-simplifications.

In Part III, an attack is made upon the fundamental concept of the whole naturalistic world-view: the concept of a mechanically fixed sequence of cause and effect. Oman is of the opinion that the dogma of mechanism, as crystallized in the positivistic philosophies of the nineteenth century, is even more of an over-simplification of reality than was the dogma of precise divine retribution, as crystallized in the Buddhist conception of Karma and the Hebrew equivalents of sin and suffering. The latter, as well as the former, represents an important and, up to a point, workable summary of certain aspects of our universal Environment; but in the long run both break down. Appeal to our actual experience of the richness, variety, and resourcefulness of life justifies affirming the reality of human freedom and the personality of God.

So far, the effort has been to transcend mere naturalism, and establish the reality of the Supernatural. Now, in the final part of the book, Oman takes up the prob-

lem of the relation between the Supernatural and the natural, or, as it would commonly be put, between God and the world. The whole history of religion is reviewed, in considerable detail and with many flashes of insight; and two great contrasting trends are revealed, toward "pantheism and absorption in the One" and toward "monotheism and victory over the many."²⁹ For monistic religion, the natural world is ultimately unreal, and mystical world-flight is the practical corollary; for monotheistic religion, the natural world remains real and in a measure sacred, as the imperfect embodiment of supernatural values, and the practical corollary is a life of hope and earnest endeavour to create a better natural world, through the indwelling power of the Supernatural. Mysticism and acosmic pantheism represent, for Oman, flights from reality, or at best glimpses of the contentless *form* of reality, needing to be filled in by common-sense awareness, scientific investigation, and active endeavour. Persian dualism and Jewish legalism are for him higher forms of approach to reality than any form of mysticism; while highest of all is the ethical religion of the prophets, whose culmination is found in the life and teaching of Jesus.³⁰

Grace and Personality begins where this later book

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 407.

³⁰ It will be seen that Oman's insistence upon the limitations of scientific knowledge does not mean a denial of its importance; nor, on the other hand, does his disparagement of "mysticism" mean a denial of the intuitive element in religious knowledge. "Mysticism" as advocated by Rufus Jones is often equivalent to Oman's intuitive "awareness"; it is only mysticism of the extreme, impersonal Oriental type (*via negativa*) that Oman rejects.

ends, with the conviction that the best religion is a thoroughly *ethical* religion. The relation between religion and ethics has been a lifelong problem with John Oman. From his Calvinistic forebears he inherits the conviction that our religious destiny depends absolutely upon the sovereign will of God. From his studies in German philosophy and theology he has drawn the conviction that Kant was right in postulating the absolute freedom of the human will as a presupposition of all ethical conduct. The antinomy of these two convictions appears almost insoluble, as Oman first states it:

The essential quality of a moral person is moral independence and an ideal person would be of absolute moral independence.

But the essential quality of a religious person is to depend on God; and he must be as absolutely dependent as a moral person must be absolutely independent.³¹

The problem thus set is a very ancient and persistently troublesome one, none other than that which was at issue between St. Augustine and Pelagius, Calvin and Arminius, and which in modern times was expressed in the contrast between the moral self-sufficiency of Kant and the Rationalists and the religious dependence of Schleiermacher and the Romanticists. Oman is persuaded that each half of the antinomy represents an absolutely essential principle, which cannot be compromised; and he rejects all solutions which either sacrifice religion to ethics, with Pelagius, or ethics to religion, with St. Augustine, or separate the one from

³¹ From *Grace and Personality*, by John Oman, p. 58. Permission of The Macmillan Company, Publishers.

the other, whether as co-working powers ("synergism") or isolated factors. It is impossible from the religious point of view to trace any good thing to human effort or human merit; all is of grace. It is impossible from the ethical point of view to see any goodness in conduct that is deterministically motivated, whether by external necessity or by irresistible divine grace.

All these makeshift solutions fall to the ground, and the antinomy is solved, when once it is seen that divine grace, as portrayed in the Gospels, cannot possibly be described as "irresistible." Grace is not "overriding omnipotence guided by omniscience," nor is it "a sort of love philtre," which can be impersonally administered in the sacraments; it is "a gracious personal relationship" between God and the human soul, whereby God persuades us to choose our own true good. Grace in this sense is the common basis of real religion and real ethics; we "accept God's will as, by insight, we discover it to be our own." Divine grace does not deserve our absolute religious dependence unless it thus respects our moral independence and treats us as responsible persons; but that is just what God the Father does, as manifested in Jesus Christ. "The essence of a personal system is not to manufacture us good, but to help us to win our freedom and the right use of it together."³²

In the important First Part of Dr. Oman's book, this conception of Grace as "a gracious personal relationship" is offered as the solution of the antinomy of religion and ethics. In the other two Parts, it is applied to the elucidation of some of the principal Christian doc-

³² *Ibid.*, Chap. X, pp. 80-90.

trines. It will suffice for our purposes to illustrate the fecundity of the principle by picking out a few of these applications. The Christian life, from this point of view, is not a life of passive quiescence, but one of eager, hopeful activity. Reconciliation with God is "*reconciliation to the discipline He appoints and the duty He demands.*"³³ Justification is no legal condonation of our sin, no way of escaping its consequences; "no reconciliation to God which accepts the duty and discipline of life is possible without accepting the consequences of our sin by which duty and discipline are so largely determined."³⁴ Trust in Providence is not trust in an omnipotence which takes men by the scruff of their necks; it is trust in the persuasiveness of divine love which wins us by indirection, through suffering and defeat. "The Rule of God is an order which is outside of us, but it exists only as it is accepted from within."³⁵

One cannot but remark how strong a flavour of Protestantism pervades this whole argument. The right of private judgement in matters of religion, the appeal to the inward witness of the Holy Spirit, the supremacy of conscience over external authority, and the duty to revolt against coercion are the very substance of the whole doctrine. Against all forms of Catholicism which contravene these fundamental principles of the Reformation, Oman is very severe. In his chapter on "The Communion of Saints," he attacks those theories of the Church which so stress the authority of tradition "that

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 273.

the past makes void God's living word," or which absorb the individual in the group, or which exalt the Church in pride, as if the way of humility and love were not still the one way of divine grace. In his chapter on "The Fellowship and Means of Grace," he accuses "extreme Catholicism" and "extreme Evangelicalism" of sharing the same conception of grace as "arbitrary acts of omnipotence." Both, he feels, tend to "persuade by impression," through ritualism or revivalistic appeals to the emotion, instead of "impressing by persuasion," as true respect for personality demands. Both limit divine grace too exclusively to ecclesiastical channels.

Instead of regarding the rest of experience as mere scenery for operations of grace which are canalised in special channels, whether priest or evangelist, we see that nothing less than our whole varied experience can suffice for making souls truly in God's image, free and not restrained, knowing as He knows, loving as He loves, choosing as He chooses, blessed as He is blessed, sons and not subjects.³⁶

Mozley, in his discussion of "Grace and Freedom" in the *Essays Catholic and Critical*, has protested against the unfairness of Oman's description of Catholicism, while heartily endorsing his general conception of grace. Doubtless most Liberal Evangelicals would react in the same way to his characterization of Evangelicalism. This in itself is an evidence of progress in Christian unity; it means that Catholics and Evangelicals have been brought near to the sons of the Puritans by

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

the mellowing effects of liberal theology upon all of them.

But Oman cannot be treated simply as a liberal. It is his great distinction to have effectually revived the Augustinian and Calvinistic theology by making one major alteration in its teaching—the substitution of *persuasive* grace for *irresistible* grace—and by so doing to have reconciled Augustinianism with Pelagianism, and shown the way out of a dilemma which has divided the Church for centuries.³⁷ If Christians of all parties could accept this solution of the problem, we might be saved much needless and harmful controversy. The decline of faith in human effort, due to the calamities of the War and the decline of Western civilization, is preparing us for another plunge into Augustinian irrationalism and immoralism; and Karl Barth seems to be urging us along that path as the only alternative to Pelagian pride of intellect and moral self-sufficiency. Catholicism, so far, has tended to avoid this dilemma by some form of weak semi-Pelagian compromise. So long as this is the case, Protestantism must stand aloof and bear its witness to the *sola gratia*. But let Catholics and Protestants agree upon some such conception as Oman's, and one of the most formidable obstacles to reunion is removed.

³⁷ I do not wish to exaggerate Oman's originality. A very similar solution of the paradox of religious dependence and moral independence was offered by Albrecht Ritschl, from whom he has obviously learned much. But it is the distinction of Oman to have strengthened his ancestral Calvinism, and its doctrine of the sovereignty of God, by making this one essential modification, which both removes the reproach of immorality from Calvinism and incorporates the essential values of Evangelicalism, Catholicism, and liberalism.

We have largely ignored in this chapter the conjunction *and* in the title, for we have confined our attention to the separate developments in Catholic and Protestant circles. Within these circles, we have seen how largely both great traditions have absorbed liberal ideas and attitudes in the past generation. But our picture of contemporary English theology will not be complete until we also note the process of assimilation which has been going on *between* these traditions, as typified by the rise of a new "Central" party in the Church of England, and by the trend toward unity between the Established and Free Churches. To these important developments we turn in our next and last chapter.

CHAPTER V

THE CENTRAL TREND OF CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH THEOLOGY

By "CENTRAL TREND" we mean something more than the mere mechanical median or resultant of all the divergent trends heretofore described. We mean to suggest that these trends are really drawing together; that the mutual gravitation which they exercise upon one another is creating a central nucleus, rotating upon its own axis, whose centripetal attraction is stronger upon the main body of English Christians than the centrifugal attraction of any extreme tendencies, whether Catholic, Protestant, or liberal.

The central trend in the Church of England is visibly symbolized by the rise of the "Central," or "Moderate," party to a position of prominence. The place occupied by this party in recent years is vividly suggested by an interesting passage in Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith's book on *Anglo-Catholicism*, published in 1925, before she became a Roman Catholic.¹ To illustrate the change in English church life in the last century, she takes the imaginary town of "Highbury," where the heroine of Jane Austen's *Emma* went to church in the early years of the nineteenth century. In place of the one dark dingy parish church, with its barrel organ and its metrical psalms, where Emma's rector, the Reverend Mr. Elton, used to read his hour-long sermons in a silk

¹ See especially Chap. V, "Looking Backward," pp. 109-121.

gown and kid gloves, we have now three Anglican churches. Two of them are new churches, one Evangelical and one Anglo-Catholic; the third is the old parish church, now the headquarters of the Moderate, or Central, party. The Anglo-Catholic church, St. Mary's, is completely Catholic in all its appointments—lights, incense, holy water, reserved sacrament in the Lady Chapel, booths for confession, and Stations of the Cross. The Evangelical church, St. Simeon's, has a rather plain altar, but it is covered with a red damask frontal, on which a cross is worked, and flanked with flowers in tall vases—all of which would have been considered "popish" a century ago. As for the Moderate church, it is hardly recognizable as Mr. Elton's church, having been completely restored. A large new altar has replaced the pulpit as the centre of attention, and the service is freely interspersed with genuflections and signs of the cross.

Miss Kaye-Smith is undoubtedly right in treating this whole situation as evidence of the profound effect of the Anglo-Catholic movement upon all the Anglican churches; but she makes no attempt to deny that the principal church in "Highbury" is the Moderate, or Central, church. In cathedral towns, the position of the Central party would be even clearer; for the cathedrals, as a rule, are conducted on Moderate lines, leaving the extremes of Catholicism, Protestantism, or liberalism to be illustrated by less important churches. It would not be too much to say that, in spite of the eccentricities of some bishops and deans, the whole weight of the

hierarchy tells in favour of a Central policy, in theology as well as in ritual.

The central trend in the Free Churches, and among theological liberals, is not so easy to see with the naked eye. It would be an exaggeration to represent the trend toward moderation and harmony as all-pervasive in these circles. Dissenters have certainly not ceased to dissent, nor Protestants to protest, against each other as well as against the alleged Romewards drift of the Established Church. Yet to American ears, dissent has a less raucous sound in England, in religious discussion as well as in political. It is tempered with more intimate knowledge of and respect for the other party than is commonly the case with us. Here, we hurl invectives loudly at one another from a distance, and do not stop for an answer; there, they remonstrate with one another in a gentle, bantering drawl, over the teacups. When conservatives and radicals are forced to rub elbows with one another continually in a tight little isle, they may contrive to separate into cliques and sets; but their constant close interaction generates a great volume of moderate sentiment which tends to prevail in a crisis. In the religious world, this moderate sentiment is creating a growing sense of unity among Free-Churchmen and a growing cordiality between Dissenters and Anglicans. It has often been remarked that the great proponents of disestablishment today are not to be found among the Dissenters, but among the Romanizing wing of the Anglo-Catholics. Meanwhile the liberal movement, as we have seen in a previous chapter, has tended to lose its separatist character in recent

years, being peacefully absorbed into the Catholic and Protestant traditions—so as to form yet another bond between them, and another element of strength in the “central trend.”

In this concluding chapter, let us first attempt to account for the present strength of the Central party in the Church of England, and the growth of the Church Unity movement. Then let us take a typical Central theologian, Archbishop Temple, not only to represent the present teachings of his party, but in a broad sense to indicate the point at which contemporary English theology as a whole may be said to have arrived. We shall then be in a position to judge of the significance of English religious thought for the rest of Christendom, and for America in particular.

I. THE CENTRAL PARTY AND THE CHURCH UNITY MOVEMENT

The forerunners of the present “Central” party in the Church of England were the so-called “Good Churchmen,” whose first leader was Bishop Samuel Wilberforce (1805-1873). The “Good Churchmen” developed out of a group of High-Churchmen who refused to join the Tractarian movement. Wilberforce was an indefatigable ecclesiastical organizer, who felt, like most organizers, that efficiency was impossible without standardization. In the name of Anglican standards, he opposed all forms of sectarian deviation, whether Anglo-Catholic, Evangelical, or liberal, but was particularly severe against all liberal tendencies. His attempt to nip Biblical criticism in the bud, in the

case of the *Essays and Reviews* and Bishop Colenso, and his famous passage-at-arms with Thomas Huxley over Darwinian evolution, have won him an unenviable reputation for bigotry; but he was essentially a Moderate, trying to steer a middle course between Catholicism and Liberal Protestantism; and his successors have become increasingly comprehensive and tolerant in their churchmanship. So tolerant are some that it is difficult to distinguish the Central from the Broad Church or liberal position; but no *pronounced* liberal is fully "Central."

In our day, the Catholic and Protestant parties in the Church of England have been brought closer together by the tacit terms of the gentlemen's agreement over the Prayer-Book controversy; and the Central party now takes its stand upon that unofficial compromise as its working platform. The successful issue of this difficult and delicate ecclesiastical negotiation was a great triumph of Anglican moderation and comprehensiveness. Chief credit for the outcome goes to Archbishop Davidson, who was charged as far back as 1906 with the task of putting an end to the continual legal conflicts over Anglo-Catholic innovations in ritual, by finding some "reasonably elastic" formulation of the law of public worship, which all but the most violent extremists could conscientiously obey. When the Archbishop's commission finally proposed its compromise, embodied in a new version of the Prayer-Book, it was twice rejected by Parliament, in 1926 and in 1927, to the immense indignation of many churchmen, who raised the cry of "Erastianism" and began to agitate for disestab-

lishment. The Church of England has never been nearer to breaking up into its diverse components than it was at that moment. The situation was saved when Archbishop Davidson assumed the right of the Church to regulate her own internal affairs independently of Parliamentary action, and permitted the new Prayer-Book to be used in those parishes where priest and people desired it, and where the Bishop was ready to stand guard against certain abuses of the "reserved sacrament" which had chiefly motivated the adverse vote in the House of Commons.

This typically British way of "muddling through" a logically insoluble situation has displeased both the extreme Anglo-Catholics and the extreme Evangelicals; but it has given immense influence to the autonomous Church Assembly set up in 1919 under the Enabling Act, and greatly strengthened the position of those who contend that the Church of England is neither exclusively Catholic nor exclusively Protestant, but a "bridge" between Rome and Geneva. A body known as the "Anglican Society" has been founded upon this platform, and this is an important organ of the Central party. Gravitation toward the Central position, both in Church polity and in theology, has carried many former Modernists and Evangelicals away from their partisan positions into a new position of communion with one another and with the Catholic tradition. Some Anglo-Catholics, perceiving that the opportunity of capturing the whole Church for partisan Catholicism has now passed, have gone over to Rome rather than continue indefinitely in communion with Protestants.

and Modernists. But the opportunity of the Church of England to play a strategic part in the reunion of Christendom is now greater than ever before.

The present status of the Church Unity movement in England is well portrayed in the following passage from Hamilton Thompson's contribution to the *Essays Catholic and Critical*:

The marked growth of forbearance between ecclesiastical parties, though not wholly without its dangers, is due to a heightening of spiritual ideals visible in every department of the Church's activities . . . And, while this closer cohesion is being effected among members of the Church of England, the need of it is felt as strongly in the religious bodies which stand outside its pale. Contemporary movements in non-conformist communions in England . . . are signalized by the desire to abandon a policy of isolation and dissidence, and to seek a common ground of reunion with those who, through all changes and chances, have held to the historic conception of the Church and its ministry.²

We shall offer evidence presently of the correctness of this judgement concerning the growth of cordial relations between the Church of England and the Nonconformist churches. But first let it be said, with emphasis, that they have not always been so cordial! The Anglican Church Unity movement itself, as expressed in the pronouncements of the successive Lambeth Conferences, has from the start been more sympathetic toward the Orthodox and Catholic churches abroad than toward the Protestant churches at home. The "Lambeth

² From *Essays Catholic and Critical*, edited by E. G. Selwyn, pp. 364, 365. Permission of The Macmillan Company, Publishers.

Quadrilateral" of 1888, which proposed reunion on the basis of (1) the Holy Scriptures, (2) the Apostles' and Nicene creeds, (3) the two sacraments ordained by Christ Himself, and (4) the historic episcopate, was admirably adapted to promote reunion among *episcopal* churches; but the prelates who devised it as a basis of reunion with non-episcopal Protestants showed a curious want of imagination. They had, of course, to guard against splitting their own church in the act of uniting with others; and the outcry raised by the Anglo-Catholics over the proposal to share the Jerusalem diocese with the Lutherans had warned them of the imminent danger from that quarter; but they might at least have remembered the Golden Rule, and not offered *any* terms to the Protestants, unless they were prepared to offer something better than the same sort of surrender-and-be-welcome terms which galled them so when they heard the Pope periodically calling his Anglican sheep back to the One Fold. As time went on, and the Lambeth proposals met with unexpected success among the episcopal churches—so that Canterbury became a great patriarchate, with which all the ancient patriarchates of the Eastern Orthodox Church were in full communion, and the modern Church of Sweden to boot—the danger of splitting this great episcopal bloc at some point by any concessions to non-episcopal churches increased step by step, until it is hard to see how the Church of England can now make even a gesture of goodwill toward the Free Churches without being called severely to account for it.

But to jump to this conclusion would be to forget the

magnificent ability of the English mind to rise superior to logic. In spite of all logical difficulties, the Anglican Church really *wants* unity with her non-episcopal brethren, wants it with an intensity of goodwill that is arousing an answering response on the other side, and beginning to melt down old barriers. No one can miss the note of sincerity in the "Appeal to All Christian People" which was issued by the Lambeth Conference in 1920. Especially impressive is its recognition that the non-episcopal churches embody "rich elements of truth, liberty, and life which might otherwise have been obscured or neglected," that their non-episcopal ministries "have been manifestly blessed and owned by the Holy Spirit as effective means of grace," and that any advance towards union must respect the principle of "mutual deference to one another's consciences"—perhaps by exchanging "commissions" which would entitle each to officiate in ways acceptable to the other.³

The response to this Appeal on the part of the Free Churches has been most friendly. While admitting that they do not attach so much importance as Anglicans to organic ecclesiastical unity, and fear lest certain precious liberties should be lost—particularly if they entered into a new relation of intimacy with the State—they one and all express willingness to explore the possibilities of closer union, provided that the granting of the aforesaid mutual "commissions" can be clearly distinguished from any form of reordination which would imply the invalidity of the Free Church ministry. Dr. A. E. Garvie of the Congregational Union has gone so

³ G. K. A. Bell, *Documents on Christian Unity*, 1920-1924, pp. 1-5.

far as to sketch out a plan for a United Church of England, in collaboration with the Bishop of Truro.⁴ Although the plan involves the appointment of Bishops for the Free Churches, and other daring innovations, it has received much favourable comment; while the plan of union between Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists in South India has likewise awakened much interest, as an indication that it is possible to unite the three polities without humiliating surrender on the part of any one.

Meanwhile the collapse of the Malines Conversations between Cardinal Mercier and a group of Anglo-Catholics has had a happy effect on the relations between Anglicans and Protestants. So long as there was any hope of reunion with Rome, there was fear of compromising it by making concessions on the other side; but now that the Holy See has made it evident that its position is fixed and immovable, the attention of Anglicans has shifted to the other end of the "bridge"; and they may yet succeed in uniting a large section of Protestantism, and bringing it into fellowship with the Eastern Orthodox churches. If this could be done without any serious sacrifice of freedom, it might help as much to revitalize the Orthodox churches as to stabilize the Protestant churches. (The remarkable work of the new Russian Orthodox Faculty of Theology at Paris has shown what distinguished contributions may be made by Eastern Orthodox churches when they come into contact with modern Western thought.) Such a united Evangelical Catholic Church, or federation of

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 87-115.

churches, if it could actually include Continental and American Protestantism, would be a mighty tower of strength against the chaotic forces that are abroad in our time. Canterbury, not Rome, would then become the real centre of Christendom—which might conceivably induce a somewhat more chastened and co-operative mood in the See of St. Peter.

But speculations of this sort obviously carry us far beyond the contemporary period. Our present concern is with the Central trend in England, as it now manifests itself in the theological sphere. The importance of this trend for the united Christendom of the future must already be evident. The consensus now developing in England is, so to speak, the first trial balloon for the larger Christian consensus that is to be. So far, the Church of Sweden and the Eastern Orthodox churches are only externally and formally a part of this consensus; but a process of discussion is going on which is creating a new common consciousness; and the centre of this whole wide-spreading process is the Central party in the Church of England.⁵ We have discussed its position so far in very general terms; let us now examine the specific theological stand which it is

⁵ I do not wish to exaggerate the actual present prestige of the Central party within Anglicanism, nor the actual present progress of unity between Anglicanism and other communions. Anglo-Catholics are apt to rejoice over the waning power of Central ecclesiasticism to restrain the growth of Catholic tendencies by purely disciplinary measures; while Hugh Martin, writing on "The Prospects for Church Union in England" (*Christendom*, I, 477-487) estimates that there has been a recession of union sentiment recently, and the opposition is "more vocal than it was" (p. 479). But it is my belief that the centralizing trend has the future with it.

taking, in the person of one of its most eminent contemporary representatives.

2. A REPRESENTATIVE CENTRAL THEOLOGIAN: ARCHBISHOP TEMPLE

The choice of a theologian to represent the Central group is not altogether easy. The Central party is the least partisan of parties; its adherents are not so clearly labelled as are the adherents of Anglo-Catholicism or Modernism. In the gradual realignment of forces which is drawing so many toward the Centre, it is almost impossible to tell when a man ceases to be a Liberal Evangelical and begins to be Central. Just where, for example, would one put the new Dean of St. Paul's, Dr. W. R. Matthews? Comparing his recent *Essays in Construction* with Dean Inge's *Outspoken Essays*, one has a distinct sense that he is not nearly so far to the left as his eminent predecessor; but Wilfred Knox, one of the most liberal of the Anglo-Catholics, finds him still too pronouncedly liberal to be truly Central.⁶ More indisputably Central are such men as Bishop Headlam of Gloucester, and Canon O. C. Quick, who in his *Essays in Orthodoxy* took up the cudgels on behalf of the historic creeds of the Church as far back as 1916, when it was distinctly less fashionable than now to be orthodox. His writings, like Bishop Headlam's, show an admirable balance between respect for tradition and eagerness to keep in touch with everything in contemporary thought which gives any promise of per-

⁶ See the contributions by Matthews and Knox to the little symposium on *Anglo-Catholicism Today* (London, 1934).

manent validity. But the theologian to whom all parties in England look up most respectfully, and to whose opinions there is the widest consent—the man who possesses in the most eminent degree that communicative flash of vision which the French call *élan*, that inspiring leap of constructive imagination which convinces one that an intellectual tradition is not merely able to survive and defend itself, but creatively active and on the advance—the one Central theologian who fully answers to this requirement is Archbishop William Temple.

Temple began his career as a liberal, and has only gradually arrived at his present Central position. His father, Archbishop Frederick Temple, was one of the contributors to the much-execrated *Essays and Reviews* of 1860; and the son followed in the father's footsteps by contributing to Canon Streeter's liberal manifesto, *Foundations*, in 1912. One remark in the Introduction to that volume is peculiarly applicable to him. "The men whose position in the Church is such that they cannot speak at all except with authority can rarely venture on experiments outside the sphere of practice . . . but we are young men, and our responsibility is of a different kind. It is the responsibility of making experiments."⁷ Temple was then a young man of thirty-one,

⁷ *Foundations*, p. x. On the liberalism of Archbishop Temple the elder, the son comments as follows: "My father was deeply and even passionately convinced of the Personality of God, and of the Deity of Jesus Christ. But he was also a courageous thinker, who had reached this intensity of conviction by the intellectual as well as by other roads; and he had at one time been persecuted as a supposed heretic. From him I learnt to reverence the Bible; but from him I learnt, too, to use my own wits in reading it. More particularly I remember asking him, when I was

lately transferred from a philosophical lectureship at Oxford to the headmastership of the boys' school at Repton. Now, he has had many years' experience as a responsible ecclesiastic, as Bishop of Manchester and Archbishop of York; and he has become typically Central in his views; but his philosophical powers have been enhanced rather than diminished in the process, and he still writes with the directness of personal conviction. He has an uncanny ability, after presiding over the debates of some ecclesiastical gathering, to make a constructive statement at the end which sums up his own convictions and those of all the contending factions. While in matters of an administrative nature he is second in command to the Archbishop of Canterbury, in the domain of Christian thought he is already Primate of All England, a truly central figure to whom all parties look up with equal respect.

Archbishop Temple's ability to combine apparently antithetical views in an inclusive synthesis doubtless springs in part from his Hegelian background. When he wrote his contributions to *Foundations*, and his first great philosophical book, *Mens Creatrix* (1917), he was an adherent of the idealistic school which then prevailed at Oxford. In Professor A. G. Widgery's book on *Contemporary Thought of Great Britain*, published in 1927, Temple figures as a sort of muddle-headed Absolute Idealist, who means to be a theist but is really

about eleven years old, why Moses called himself 'the meekest of men,' and his replying, 'I expect he spake unadvisedly with his pen.' From *Contemporary British Philosophy*, 1st series, p 412, edited by Muirhead. Permission of The Macmillan Company, Publishers.

a pantheist. "His work," says Widgery, rather cruelly, "is an example of the apparent inability of many Oxford thinkers to appreciate radical distinctions, and their proneness to high-sounding generalities."⁸ This harsh judgement upon Temple's work may have been influenced by the fact that his philosophy was then in a state of transition from idealism to realism. In his recently published Gifford Lectures on *Nature, Man and God*, he describes himself as a "Dialectical Realist." This constitutes so much of a break with his period of idealistic liberalism that we shall ignore *Foundations* and *Mens Creatrix* in our exposition of his teaching, and devote our attention principally to the Gifford Lectures. Since the Gifford Lectures deal only with Natural Theology, we shall supplement them with one important earlier work, *Christ the Truth* (1924), which presupposes the Christian revelation to which the Gifford Lectures lead up, and so carries on their argument from the philosophical into the specifically theological sphere.

By "dialectical realism," Archbishop Temple means to designate a philosophy which resembles the "dialectical materialism" of Karl Marx in its recognition of the secondary place of mind within the cosmic process, but which attributes to mind and its ideals a freedom and a metaphysical significance which Marx denies to them. While rejecting the idealistic doctrine of the priority of mind to the world which it knows, he is led at last to stress the priority of Divine Mind, as the only theory upon which the world can be intelligible. Starting with

⁸ Widgery, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

scientific Materialism as at least empirically true, he passes through four great "dialectical transitions" in the endeavour to interpret the world thus given, until at last he arrives at a view so close "in its positive content" to that of his old teacher Edward Caird—"apart from the method of arriving at it"—that he feels justified in dedicating the lectures to his memory.⁹

The first of these four dialectical transitions—about which the whole book may be said to revolve—occurs at the end of the first five lectures, which are devoted to the problem of knowledge, and the place of the knowing mind in the world-process. Temple is of the opinion that we are at the end of an era of individualistic revolt against authority which began in the sixteenth century with Descartes's *Cogito ergo sum* and Luther's *Hier steh' ich, ich kann nicht anders*. As a reaction against the inadequacies of mediæval scholasticism, the revolt was necessary; we can never go back to mediæval thought with its changeless essences since modern thought has opened our eyes to the evolutionary flux of things; but on the constructive side, modern philosophy has been vitiated from the start by the fatal self-centredness of the appeal to consciousness, which has no logical outcome but solipsism and complete scepticism. We must go back not to mediævalism, but to the healthy objectivism of the mediæval mind, combined with the sincerity of the modern mind.

This means, among other things, the abandonment of the idealistic retort to materialistic science, upon which religion has counted so heavily in her attempt to

⁹ *Nature, Man and God*, p. 498.

assert the supremacy of the spiritual: "I, mind, am the maker of the world in which I seem to be a late arrival." An honest, objective reading of the facts of science forbids us this argument. We must recognize that "apprehension takes place within the world, not the world within apprehension," and consciousness arises as a late "emergent" in the world-process of which it gradually becomes conscious. But this does not mean that mind and consciousness are homeless waifs in a material universe. Their very presence in the natural process requires a dialectical jump of explanation:

If nature is only a whirling mass of protons and electrons, that gyration might intelligibly go on for ever, and at some point in its endless permutations would present us with the physical universe of contemporary experience. . . . But if, as science has disclosed, Mind is part of Nature, then Nature (to contain such a part) must be grounded in Mind.¹⁰

The argument so far requires only the hypothesis of "immanent theism." The second dialectical transition, at the end of the tenth lecture, carries us from the idea of an immanent Central Mind to that of a transcendent divine Personality, active within the world process but not wholly dependent on or organic to it. This transition develops out of a closer analysis of the concrete characteristics of the human mind, whose presence in the world requires adequate explanation. Mind as we know it from general experience—quite apart from religious experience, to which we do not refer at this stage of the argument—is something more than a

¹⁰ From *Nature, Man and God* by William Temple, pp. 133, 134. Permission of The Macmillan Company, Publishers.

register of useful facts. It seeks intelligible Truth, it appreciates and creates Beauty, it lends itself to the requirements of moral Goodness; and at its best, it reverences these Absolute Values for their own sake, bowing before them as before something akin to itself, yet immensely higher and greater.

The argument here is closely parallel to Dean Inge's Platonic ascent from values to God, with one important difference: Goodness is exalted as the supreme and inclusive value. Personal Will or Purpose in God is for Temple the transcendent Ground of all our value experiences, and of our experience of free-will or self-determination. Moral goodness and personal will are only subordinate elements in Dean Inge's prevailingly mystical conception of God; they are dominant elements in Archbishop Temple's prevailingly ethical and social conception. This is still plainer in the parallel passages of *Mens Creatrix*, where tragedy is treated as the highest form of art, and grave international problems are related to the thought of God with a deep social concern and a sure grasp of moral issues in politics of which one is never equally conscious in the gloomy Dean's somewhat prejudiced and hysterical pronouncements on these themes. In one respect, however, Temple and Inge are absolutely agreed: they are convinced that a God who is merely immanent, merely organic to the world, is no adequate explanation of the world. If God and World are merely correlated terms, so that each explains the other, as in Professor Whitehead's philosophy, then the totality God plus World is unexplained. Only in the idea of a transcendent Per-

sonal Will can the adequate explanation of the world be found.

The more we study the activity of God immanent, the more we become aware of God transcendent. The Truth that strikes awe in the scientist is awful because it is His thought; the Beauty that holds spell-bound the artist is potent because it is His glory; the Goodness that pilots us to the assured apprehension of Reality can do this because it is His character; and the freedom whereby man is lifted above all other nature, even to the possibility of defying it, is fellowship with Him. "Heaven and earth are full of His glory"; but He is more and other than all that is in earth and heaven.¹¹

The third quarter of *Nature, Man and God* is perhaps the richest and most suggestive part of this extraordinarily able book. Having climbed in its first half ("The Transcendence of the Immanent") to the conception of God as above Nature, the argument now turns back to earth, and considers how God relates Himself to human experience and human needs, through His immanent operation in the world ("The Immanence of the Transcendent"). Two great words dominate the discussion: *Revelation* and *Grace*. Both are used, at this stage, in a very general sense, and no appeal is made to the specific witness of Christian experience; but it is made plain that general revelation and general grace require a more special revelation and special grace to make possible full reconciliation between God and Man.

General revelation is itself something special, by comparison with that universal revelation of God which

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 269-270.

shines through the whole of His creative activity in the world. Temple is very emphatic in his declaration of the reality of this most general form of revelation, and its importance as a ground of faith in more specific revelation. "*Either all occurrences are in some degree revelation of God,*" he declares, "*or else there is no such revelation at all; for the conditions of the possibility of any revelation [namely, that an Ultimate Reality exists and is personal] require that there should be nothing which is not revelation. Only if God is revealed in the rising of the sun in the sky can He be revealed in the rising of a son of man from the dead; only if He is revealed in the history of Syrians and Philistines (Amos 9:7) can He be revealed in the history of Israel; only if He chooses all men for His own can He choose any at all; only if nothing is profane can anything be sacred.*" The belief in particular revelations, conceived as isolated divine incursions unrelated to universal revelation, may easily become superstitions. "But," says Temple, "*if all existence is a revelation of God, as it must be if He is the ground of its existence, and if the God thus revealed is personal, then there is more ground in reason for expecting particular revelations than for denying them.*"¹²

What, then, is the nature of those particular revelations which may be expected to come from a personal God from time to time? Not dictated words nor irresistibly inspired thoughts, not Sacred Books nor authoritative Creeds, not anything that is handed to man ready-made, perfect or infallible, but simply the inter-

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 306, 307 (italics are the author's).

action between specially revealing events and specially appreciative minds, "the coincidence of event and appreciation."¹³ The primary medium of revelation is the world-process itself, within which extraordinarily luminous events periodically occur, which manifest the infinite resourcefulness and adaptability of God's unchanging purpose. It is a mistake to regard these extraordinary occurrences as instances of the interruption of God's regular activity by the arbitrary intervention of His transcendent Will. Rather, the reverse is true. As transcendent, God is "eternally self-identical"; as immanent, God is "a principle or energy of adjustment and therefore of variation." While it is in accord with God's good and unchanging purpose that the world-process should exhibit a general uniformity, variations from uniformity may occur whenever there is "sufficient reason," grounded in that same abiding purpose. "*Miracles, if they occur, are as much the manifestation of God immanent as are the regular processes of Nature.*"¹⁴ Temple believes that miracles do occur; but revealing events are not always miraculous. God may use any natural event in the world-process—let us say, the flight of Israel from Egypt—to convey a meaning to mankind. "*He guides the process; He guides the minds of men; the interaction of the process and the minds which are alike guided by Him is the essence of revelation.*"¹⁵ Revelation so conceived is authoritative, as Truth, Beauty, and Goodness are authoritative

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 315.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 295.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 312.

—not because any formulation of it, even the Nicene Creed, is infallible or exempt from criticism, but because it consistently evokes appreciation and awe, in every generation that is exposed to the record of it, and tends to bring all truth and value to a luminous focus, in every mind that reverently approaches it. The authority of revelation and the test of religious experience are supplementary and not opposing principles.

In passing from the idea of Revelation to the idea of Grace, we pass through the third great dialectical transition, which is necessitated by the presence of Evil in the world-process. How Evil, especially Moral Evil or Sin, can exist in a world grounded in Divine Purpose, must always be a serious problem for the theist. A partial explanation is to be found in man's capacity for "free ideas," in which his power of limited self-determination has been found to consist. Like the animals, man is *self-centred*; but unlike them, he is capable of deliberate imaginative *self-assertion*, which builds for itself a distorted, egoistic scale of values and sets itself to achieve them in conscious opposition to the claims of objective Truth and Goodness. This is Sin; and because of the law of social solidarity, the force of it accumulates and spreads from generation to generation, until every personality that comes into the world tends to be tainted by it, to its inmost centre. This need not have occurred, and is plainly contrary to the Will of God; yet man's free-will cannot bear all the blame for it. Given man's biological self-centredness and the finitude of his knowledge, his Fall was "too probable not to happen," and so must be supposed to come within

God's plan. If God thus allowed man to fall and made no provision to raise him up, it would be impossible to believe in the divine goodness, for man obviously cannot lift himself out of his own self-centredness by his own efforts. But all religious experience bears witness to a gracious "call from without," which reaches through man's tainted nature to that which is still sound in him, urging him to make a sharp break with his habit of self-assertion, and find a new centre beyond himself. All the ideal values mediate such a call to man, and in so far as he learns to love them he is responding to the solicitations of divine grace. Yet man's response to grace in this general form is seldom more than half-hearted. The ideal values expand the circle of his interests but he is still at the centre of it. Only a complete self-giving and self-sacrifice on the part of God could win the complete love and trust of His creatures. It is the belief of Christians that God has given this perfect and compelling Grace in the Cross as He has given the perfect Revelation of Himself in the Incarnation; and for Christians, all sense of human merit vanishes in a sense of overwhelming gratitude; but the discussion of these high themes does not belong to Natural Theology.

In the concluding quarter of the book, the final destiny of Man and Nature are foreshadowed as far as this is possible on the basis of the partial insight into the Nature of God to which the whole inductive argument has led; and the insufficiency of the answer given leads to a final dialectical transition which takes us clean out of the sphere of Natural Theology and sets us

on the threshold of the Christian faith. The four main problems considered are (1) the place of human individuality, (2) of the temporal order, (3) of this present earthly life, and (4) of the material universe, within the eternal purposes of God. Temple remarks that the modern age, in contrast to the mediæval, has exalted the individual above the group, time above eternity, the present life above the life to come, and matter above spirit. He does not put in a plea for a return to mediævalism, for he feels that all the characteristic modern emphases represent "principles capable of disproportionate emphasis but intrinsically sound."

In the Kingdom of God, or, to use his own phrase, the "Commonwealth of Value," there is room for individuality, temporality, and the pursuit of worldly, material goods, in so far as all these things are sacramental bearers of the Eternal Values and instruments of the Eternal Purposes. The destiny of all finite individuals is to achieve fellowship with one another and with God in an eternal "Harmony of Minds and Values," of which He is the centre and they are humble but essential parts. History has no meaning if it has no connection with Eternity; but the Eternal is *not* unaffected by the temporal, as Plato claimed. Everything that happens in history gives a specific colour to eternity; hence the present life deserves all the attention we can give it. It is unhealthy to let the mind dwell upon Heaven and Hell, and "positively undesirable that there should be experimental proof of man's survival of death." Man is not naturally but only potentially immortal, and the condition of the attainment

of immortality is a self-forgetful love of God and of the Good, which attaches man to things eternal. Failure to meet this condition means perdition; but we may have "the hope that in eternity every soul which God has made shall thank Him for every tittle of its experience,"¹⁶ since His grace shall at last find out each one of us, and prepare us by suffering in which He shares for union with Himself. The union of the soul with the body is no obstacle to this. The body is not a prison-house, nor an evil thing, and the material universe is not the enemy of spirituality. It is as real as materialism claims; but it is capable of becoming the instrument of Spirit for the accomplishment of its ends. For this end it was created by God; and His purpose will not be accomplished until Nature and all human institutions become sacramental, in the sense that they actually embody and convey the spiritual meanings that they are essentially fitted to symbolise.

In the final lecture, entitled "The Hunger of Natural Religion," Temple argues that the hopeful termination of his whole argument is imperilled unless the fully adequate Revelation and fully adequate Grace to which it all seems to point are indeed as actual as Christianity claims. Man cannot escape from moral evil by himself, nor be reconciled to its consequences by himself; and his views of reality as well as his character are profoundly affected by the apparent hopelessness of his struggle with evil. Natural religion with its dutiful pursuit of the ideal values is insufficient to bring about the realisation of those values. Unless God

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 471.

has actually communicated to man the power to overcome evil and turn it into good, the belief in God is a mockery and cannot finally be sustained. Natural Religion and Natural Theology alone cannot give man the assurance of God's self-communicating redemptive activity. They can show man that his nature would find its fulfilment in absolutely self-forgetful worship; but they cannot set before him a God who fully deserves such worship. Only the Christian Religion can do this.

In *Christ the Truth*, Archbishop Temple carries out more fully the implications of this closing affirmation of his Gifford Lectures, that in Christ the full revelation of God has been made which gathers all the truth into one, and the grace of God has been bestowed which meets our sorest need. It will be impossible for us to follow the whole course of this remarkable argument, as it pushes in from the periphery of things toward the centre, finds Christ to be the centre, then passes out again into a world suffused with his light and flooded with his power. The parts of it which are most needed to supplement the argument of *Nature, Man and God* are the parts that deal with the central Christian mysteries, concerning which Natural Theology must needs be silent: the Person and Work of Christ, the Church as the Body of Christ and the home of the Spirit, the sacraments as the supreme Means of Grace.

The Incarnation is to Temple the crowning illustration of the principle "that every grade in Reality finds its own fulfilment only when it is possessed by a higher

grade, and that each higher grade uses those which are lower than itself for its expression."¹⁷ In the man Jesus, true Humanity appears for the first time, glorified and fulfilled by union with God, and God is expressed as Divine Personality can only be expressed through the medium of ideal human personality. How God and Man can thus be united will always remain mysterious; but Temple suggests that God "takes direction of" Man in the Incarnation very much as Life takes command of a physico-chemical system when it "supervenes" upon Matter, or Mind, when it supervenes upon a living organism. The laws of physics and biology are superseded when Life and Mind appear; so the laws of ordinary humanity are superseded when Christ appears, and miracles are to be expected. This is not to say that the human life of Jesus was freed, by union with God, of those physical and mental limitations which are so evident in the Gospel narrative. "What we find in the Christian experience is witness, not to a Man uniquely inspired, but to God living a human life."¹⁸ The doctrine of the *Kenosis* is rejected; the Eternal Word did not give up his cosmic creative activity to walk the roads of Galilee, or retract his omniscience within human limitations. "The limitations are the means whereby the Eternal Son, remaining always within the bosom of the Father, lays bare to us the very heart of Godhead."¹⁹ Henceforth, our human sufferings and struggles are

¹⁷ *Christ the Truth*, p. 147.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

"matter of His own experience"; we are assured that God has shared our bitterest woe, and conquered it.

In the Passion and Resurrection of the Christ, God's revelation of Himself is completed, and His grace is shown to be sufficient to overcome all evil, both human and cosmic. The God of Christianity is not the "apathetic" God of Aristotle, despite vestiges of that pagan conception in the Greek Fathers and the Anglican Articles. "He reigns from the Tree. Because, and only because, His goodness is so perfect as to include self-sacrifice, His power is known to be supreme and all-controlling."²⁰ If the hardness of the human heart cannot ultimately resist the forgiveness which costs God pain and death, then we may trust that every other form of evil shall ultimately be transmuted into good through the divine Power of Love.

The light and the grace which were released into the world through the Incarnation and the Atonement are perpetuated in the Church, which is Christ's body and filled with His Spirit. The sacraments of the Church are the most concentrated form in which the Church offers the Spirit to her members. They are not the only means of grace, but in them the divine initiative is more palpable than in other forms of worship, and Christ brought even nearer to us than his other body, the Church, makes possible.

The universe [says Temple] is the fundamental sacrament, and taken in its entirety (when of course it includes the Incarnation and Atonement) is the perfect sacrament extensively, but it only becomes this, so far as our world and human history

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 326.

are concerned, because within it and determining its course is the Incarnation, which is the perfect sacrament intensively—the perfect expression in a moment of what is perfectly expressed in everlasting Time, the Will of God; resulting from the Incarnation we find the “Spirit-bearing Body,” which is not actually a perfect sacrament, because its members are not utterly surrendered to the spirit within it, but none the less lives by the Life which came fully into the world in Christ; as part of the life of this Body we find certain specific sacraments or sacramental acts.²¹

This passage may be taken as the key to Temple's theory of the sacraments and to his whole theology. He points out that St. Thomas Aquinas himself, in his theory of Transubstantiation, denied that the Body of Christ was in the Blessed Eucharist “*sicut in loco*, as if in a place,” and suggests that “Transvaluation” or “Convaluation” would be a very proper term to express the sense in which Christ is really present in the sacred elements. They express his meaning and convey his Spirit, when consecrated for that purpose in obedience to his intent, just as his earthly Body did and just as his Body the Church does in a more extensive and less intensive way. When we expose ourselves to his Presence and take to ourselves his Body in the Eucharist, more happens to us than if we were alone with our own thoughts, and more than we are ever fully conscious of. This is the truth in the *ex opere operato* conception.

Here we have the full development of that more rational and persuasive theory of the sacraments which

²¹ From *Christ the Truth*, by William Temple, p. 279. Permission of The Macmillan Company, Publishers.

is generally obscured in Anglo-Catholicism by inconsistent traditional concepts; and it is the logical outcome of Temple's whole cosmic philosophy. The only Anglo-Catholic who may be said to have worked out an equally comprehensive setting for his sacramentalism is Professor A. E. Taylor. American Protestants, if they desire a real theological basis for the rising tide of ritualism and sacramentalism which is already observable in this country, would do well to consult these two thinkers. From them we might learn how to restate the doctrine of the sacraments which is in our historic Protestant Confessions of Faith, but which has fallen into practical desuetude for centuries.

CONCLUSION: WHAT AMERICAN THEOLOGY CAN LEARN FROM ENGLISH THEOLOGY

THE CATHOLIC and eclectic character of contemporary English theology is either a liability or an asset, according to one's point of view. To severely and polemically logical minds, which revel in sharp distinctions and sharp alternatives, the English tendency to say "both . . . and" instead of "either . . . or" seems evidence of a lack of ability to think clearly. Thus Professor Widgery in his book on *Contemporary Thought of Great Britain* pronounces the following sweeping judgement upon British thought as a whole:

The general impression gained by a survey of the contemporary thought of Great Britain is not an inspiring one. On all sides there are doubts and uncertainties, and a lack of resolute conviction with regard to a possible and acceptable philosophy of life. On most sides there is a tendency to compromise, a reluctance to make sharp distinctions. There is no vigorous comprehensive philosophy which, with established intellectual supremacy, might at the same time dominate the minds and guide the lives of the people.¹

So far as philosophy in the narrow and technical sense of the word is concerned, Professor Widgery's estimate of the present state of British thought is perhaps deserved. Since the passing of Bradley, Bosanquet and the other great idealists, no philosophic school of equal strength and unity has arisen to take their places.

¹ A. G. Widgery, *op. cit.*, p. 232. New York, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

Bertrand Russell, with all his brilliant clarity and imaginative sweep, has found no "acceptable philosophy of life." But if theology is meant to be included in this judgement—as is implied in Widgery's reference, a bit later, to "the general formalism of British theology"—one must beg leave to dissent. In certain lines, as for example in Biblical scholarship, theology may be somewhat backward in England today, as compared with the great period of scholarly activity before the War; but so far as the constructive presentation of Christian truth is concerned, this must be described as a great and inspiring period in the history of English thought, and one that is actually producing—not by slovenly compromise but by clear and comprehensive thinking—the kind of consensus that promises to "dominate the minds and guide the lives of the people."

The nature and extent of this consensus will appear if we compare the four principal religious parties in contemporary England, impersonating each one in a representative thinker, and noting how much they have in common, in spite of their natural divergencies. Let Professor A. E. Taylor act as spokesman for the authors of the *Essays Catholic and Critical*, John Oman for the Protestants, Dean Inge for the liberal free-lances, and Archbishop Temple for the Central party. All four of these thinkers have arrived at a point of view radically different from that of the Romantic idealism which prevailed before the War, and which some of them formerly accepted. Matter and evil, unreal to the idealists, are very real to these contemporary thinkers, and the illusion of automatic progress has been thoroughly

dispelled from their minds. Instead of an immanent God whose nature is expressed in the general world-process and in secular culture, all four of them look to a genuinely supernatural and transcendent God, uniquely revealed in Christ and the Church. All of them find man's final destiny not in this "vale of soul-making" but in the world of the Eternal Values of which the transcendent God is the Eternal Ground.

At all these points, our four representative English thinkers are unanimously opposed to the type of liberal theology which prevailed before the War—just as definitely as Karl Barth, Karl Heim or Emil Brunner. But unlike Continental theologians, they are likewise unanimous in their belief in the relative and partial validity of a natural theology or a philosophy of religion built up by the inductive method upon the basis of natural science, moral and æsthetic values, and religious experience. Such a natural theology—illustrated by many distinguished series of Gifford Lectures—our English theologians consider to be, not a wicked exhibition of the pride of human reason, but a necessary safeguard against bigotry and superstition; and at its best a confirmation of the higher truths of Christian revelation. Divine revelation and human reason, divine grace and human effort are not for them contradictory principles, but correlative principles.

It is possible of course to assert this "both . . . and" in a merely eclectic sense, without thinking it through. Doubtless English theology has been guilty of much slipshod compromise on these great issues, to which the fiery intransigence of Karl Barth is a welcome cor-

rective. But our four representative theologians have certainly risen above this level, by hard consistent thinking upon the proper spheres of religious faith, moral effort, philosophical and scientific knowledge, and the relation between them. John Oman, for example, has clearly shown in his *Grace and Personality* how divine grace conceived as "irresistible" destroys both religion and morals, but divine grace conceived as "persuasive" preserves both the religious attitude of absolute dependence and the moral attitude of absolute independence. With equal clarity, Archbishop Temple has shown how the reality of God's general revelation in nature and history is presupposed in the affirmation of His special revelation in Christ, and creates a presumption of its probability. The last Lambeth Conference's pamphlet on "The Christian Doctrine of God" gave the official *imprimatur* to this view by describing modern natural science as a genuine new revelation of God.

How important and how deep-going is the difference at this point between contemporary English and contemporary Continental theology was brought sharply home to me by an incident which occurred last summer during the International Theological Seminar at Geneva. Professor Bouquet of Cambridge, in a lecture on Anglican theology, quoted Archbishop Temple's statement that "*unless all existence is a medium of Revelation, no particular Revelation is possible . . . only if nothing is profane can anything be sacred.*"² When this was translated into German, an audible gasp of amazement and horror arose from the German dele-

² *Nature, Man and God.* p. 306.

gation—mostly composed of Barthians and other adherents of the Confessional Church—and they asked excitedly to have the whole passage read again, slowly, that they might take it down. Apparently, they considered that to admit the presence of divine revelation outside of the Bible was to deny the uniqueness and supremacy of the Bible. Well, for my part, I must confess that when I heard that gasp of horror arise from the German delegation, all my many doubts about the Barthian theology suddenly crystallised into a settled antipathy. "So *that* is what Barthianism means!" I said to myself. "The denial of the doctrine of the Logos. The denial that God is in any sense rightly to be known—even by Christian believers like Archbishop Temple—from the consideration of the general spectacle of nature and history. The attempt to confine God's self-revelation to one lurid, overwhelming flash of lightning, which does not even illuminate the surrounding landscape, but strikes the believer blind and dumb, unable to articulate his faith except in negatives."

I make this confession in the hope that some follower of Karl Barth will rise to his defence, and convince me that the Barthian doctrine is not so dangerous as I think it is. I quite realize that it is unjust to judge any theologian by the fanatical form which his teaching assumes in the minds of over-zealous young theological students. Yet when I read, and reread, that amazing little pamphlet called "*Nein!*" in which Karl Barth commits verbal assault and battery upon his former adherent, Emil Brunner, for daring to suggest that there is a place in Christian teaching for the right

sort of natural theology, and that there is an *Anknüpfungspunkt* or point of contact for the Gospel revelation even in our fallen human nature, I find it difficult to restrain a gasp of dismay at the obscurantistic zeal of the author, and I find myself answering his "*Nein!*" with an equally emphatic "*Nol!*" As a critic of modern liberal theology, he has put us all in his debt, and I hope to continue to profit by his teaching, as a "pinch of spice"—to use his own expression—"to be taken with any theology one may happen to have"; but whenever I take his pinch of spice I reserve the right of taking it with a grain of salt! In other words, I regard him as a great heretic, capable of rendering service to the Church Catholic, like Marcion and Tertullian, but only when his intemperate zeal for certain half-truths is tempered by the richer experience and soberer judgement of all Christendom.

I believe that American theology stands today at the cross-roads; and very grave issues hang upon our decision whether to take the turn indicated by the Barthian sign-post, or to follow the road on which contemporary English theology is travelling.

That pre-War liberalism—call it Modernism if you will—with its excessive trust in human science and human co-operative endeavour, is not able to weather the gale in the present stormy era of social change and catastrophe, I take for granted. The steady growth of theological conservatism since the World War, both in England and on the Continent, foreshadows the inevitable trend of events in America, by a law which has never failed throughout our history. Divine revela-

tion and divine grace, as the ultimate ground of all human hope, are concepts which are destined to rise to new power in our thought and life. Pelagianism is going out; Augustinianism is coming in. I am saying to all my friends in the Presbyterian and Reformed churches that this is a poor time for any of them, who inherit the Augustinian and Calvinistic faith in the sovereignty of God, to abandon it because of the rational paradoxes which it involves.

But everything depends upon whether, in turning away from Modernism, we react against reason altogether, as Continental Europe is in danger of doing, or whether we include the truth of Modernism and the truth of the whole modern era in a more comprehensive body of truth, as contemporary English theology is doing. The mood and temper of Continental Europe today is one of panic, despair, and hysterical clutching at every possible means of support which offers itself with an air of authority. Doubtless God means to convey some great truth to humanity through the sufferings of modern Continental Europe, as He did through the sufferings of ancient Israel; but this truth is not articulate in their present cries of desperation. Karl Heim makes the unbalanced and desperate mood of present-day Continental thought plain in his striking lectures on *The Church of Christ and the Problems of the Day*, addressed specifically to us Americans. He describes how the decline of political and religious liberalism on the Continent has been accompanied by a general bankruptcy of "ideas," and the rise to supremacy of the "Leader"—Lenin, Mussolini, Hitler—

who wins allegiance not because men believe in or understand his programme, but because he encloses them in the "charmed circle" of his personal prestige, and appears to them as a man of destiny.

Where real leadership exists [says Heim] I have trusted myself to a leader, whose purpose I only see in part. I give him my whole trust. He has captured me. He may lead me now, either to death or to life. All later decisions must issue from the dark womb of the future, and be born in pregnant night.³

We may agree with Heim that Christian faith in Christ culminates in a personal trust in Christ, which is something more than a rational assurance of the truth of his ideas. But no American can contemplate without grave misgivings the sort of religion he describes. Our nation was conceived in liberalism, and dedicated to the proposition that free men ought to bow their heads in obedience only before a government, or a deity, whose disposition toward them showed some plainly recognisable signs of benevolence and rationality. For an American wholly to abandon liberalism, whether in politics or in religion, would be to affirm that the very existence of our nation is an affront to Almighty God; that we were conceived in sinful pride and born in an iniquitous trust in human "ideas" of right and wrong, and ought to curse the day we were born.

I for one cannot do that. I recognize that we have

³ Heim, *op. cit.*, p. 106. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935. It should be said that Heim makes room in his theology, in his own way, for the relative truth of liberalism and rationalism, as Emil Brunner does in quite a different way. (Heim, *op. cit.*, Chap. I, on "Rationalisation: its Power and Limits.")

sinned, and need to repent, but I cannot believe America has no value or mission in God's sight, and deserves simply to be obliterated. Moreover, I cannot believe that it is a sin to hate tyranny, whether human or divine, and to reserve our loyalty for a God who, in all His ineffable mystery, yet shows Himself to us as light and not darkness, encouraging us in the pursuit of truth and justice, as free men and not as slaves. It is because England stands out today, in a world that is drifting into passive resignation to tyranny and blind destiny, as one place where "ideas" are free and active, and men revere truth and duty as the voice of God, as did our ancestors when they sought these shores—it is for that reason, above all, that I hope we shall seek the new grounding we need for our faith, in this country, in harmony and co-operation with the leading figures in contemporary English theology.

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